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Why Amazon boss is prime suspect



Below-inflation 'rise' for public sector after years of cuts >>Page 20

Tory 'pay rises' are just a shoddy deal

Socialist Worker

£1 | No 2614 | 25-31 July 2018 | socialistworker.co.uk

MORE VICTORIES FOR ANTI-FASCISTS ACROSS BRITAIN



HUNDREDS OF anti-racists jeer at a pathetic Nazi turnout in Worcester last Saturday. The fascists were also outnumbered in Cambridge and Glasgow

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STRIKES

Care workers to hit back in Birmingham

by SARAH BATES

CARERS IN Birmingham are getting ready to strike back at council bosses who want to force through redundancies and huge cuts.

Workers were set to start an escalating programme of strikes that will see them walk out on Tuesday and Wednesday of next week. This will be followed by 12 more days of strikes in August.

The Unison union members are members of the home enablement team.

They have been fighting against attacks to the service, which supports people in their own homes following discharge from hospital, for over 18 months.

Council bosses have already



Unison rep Mandy Buckley

slashed the workforce by 48 percent, and their latest volley of attacks threatens the equivalent of 55 full time jobs.

Labour-led Birmingham council has spent £12 million on a private consultancy to "redesign" adult social care.

Their plans would amount to a £3 million cut to the home enablement service.

The council wants to shift the low-paid workforce from full time hours to rotas of 14, 21 or 23 hours a week. The vast majority of the workers are women.

Unison senior shop steward Mandy Buckley spoke to Socialist Worker in a personal capacity. She said workers were

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NEW LAWS TARGET ARABS ISRAEL IS A RACIST STATE

**ATTACK THE
RIGHT, NOT
CORBYN**

>>Pages 6&7



THE THINGS THEY SAY

'A social pariah'

The Daily Mail on the Honey Monster, face of unhealthy Honey Monster Puffs cereal

'It is becoming a nanny state'

Honey Monster puppeteer Peter Pullon

'Your favourite President'

Donald Trump's glowing self-description in a tweet

'The summit with Russia was a great success, except with the real enemy of the people, the Fake News Media'

Donald Trump, inviting Russian leader Vladimir Putin to Washington

'We are creating a nation of fat, idle people who will bankrupt the NHS'

Tory peer and former minister Lord Blencathra

'Pressure to obtain results could be unhelpful to the juvenile CHIS [covert human intelligence sources]'

The Home Office on the use of children as spies



Anti-corruption police force investigated for corruption

SCOTLAND YARD is embroiled in the largest police corruption inquiry for 40 years, with 14 officers under investigation for "serious corruption and malpractice" by the police watchdog.

The Metropolitan Police's anti-corruption command, known as the Directorate of Professional Standards (DPS), secretly covers up misconduct rather than investigating it.

Gross misconduct notices have been served on three officers while a "number" of others are being assessed, according to the police watchdog.

One of the three is also under criminal investigation.

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) is looking at claims that "potentially conflicted" senior



THOSE SUPPOSED to catch criminals may have been criminals

officers in the Metropolitan Police DPS interfered with or curtailed investigations or failed to look at alleged wrongdoing altogether.

The investigation, code-named Operation Embley, has seen three whistleblowers from the force allege that members of the DPS were

protecting officers from a range of allegations.

It is claimed that officers faced claims of child abuse, grooming, fraud, physical assault and racism.

One officer is understood to be under investigation for perverting the course of justice and misconduct

in a public office.

Another officer is accused of intentionally driving a motorcycle into a member of the public.

One of Britain's highest-profile police chiefs is to be investigated after he was accused of malpractice for improperly interfering in an investigation into bullying.

There has been a series of corruption scandals at the Metropolitan Police over the past 50 years.

In the late 1970s and 1980s Operation Countryman investigated claims that some officers were helping organised criminals.

That inquiry resulted in misconduct proceedings but no criminal convictions.

The IOPC employs many of the corruption unit's former officers as investigators.

THE GOVERNMENT has admitted "mistakenly" using a spoof poster that suggested parents should shoot children if they had rabies. The image appeared in a magazine for civil servants in a feature on the history of government communications.

The poster was originally produced by the fictional Scarfolk Council, a social media parody account.



Government information?

SELLAFIELD nuclear plant has been charged after a worker was allegedly exposed to plutonium.

Sellafield did not enter a plea before a district judge in Workington to the charge that can lead to an unlimited fine. The case will be heard at Carlisle Crown Court on 17 August.

Minister backs up rubbish NHS app

HEALTH SECRETARY Matt Hancock has moved from making his own pointless apps to promoting others pointless apps to help with the run down of the NHS.

An app that uses artificial intelligence to assess medical symptoms and boasts more than 2.5 million users faces regulatory scrutiny after complaints from doctors, who warn that it can miss signs of serious illness.

Babylon Health has formed partnerships with the English National Health Service as well as Samsung and Tencent.

Now the

regulatory system classes Babylon's service alongside items such as spectacles and sticking plasters.

When told that a 66 year old obese male smoker was experiencing sudden chest pain and excessive sweating, Babylon suggested nine out of ten people with similar symptoms were likely to be having a panic attack.

It made no mention of the risk of a heart attack. It's advice for a nose bleed was to take Viagra.



Matt Hancock

Government knew of Rotherham cover-up

THE government knew that police were failing to protect sexually exploited children in Rotherham over a decade before an inquiry exposed the scale of the scandal.

An inquiry published in 2014 estimated that at least 1,400 children had been sexually exploited in the town over a 16-year period.

But the Home Office received a document in 2001 that said there were "difficulties in persuading the police to accept that child sexual exploitation is a child protection issue".

It received another report dated June 2002 which included case

studies. One described how police decided a 14 year old girl in a house with adult men was "not in any danger".

The report referred to "judgemental moral attitudes" towards young women and said there is "no indication" that men exploiting them would be prosecuted.

A review published last week looked at information passed to the Home Office between 1998 and 2005.

It said "closer consideration" of some information "could have uncovered faster the failings we now know were putting children at risk".

Ukipper jailed for murder

EX-UKIP councillor Stephen Searle was jailed for life last week after murdering his wife. Searle strangled his wife Anna in December last year.

When he called the cops to report her death he told them, "I've just killed my wife. Happy New Year. I have been a very naughty boy."

Former Ukip leader of Suffolk County Council Bill Mountford said after the verdict that he still considered Searle "a friend".

"These things happen," he added. "I still regard Steve as fundamentally a decent man. I feel equally sorry for both Steve and his now deceased wife."



KNOW YOUR ENEMY

No. 3,769

Boris Johnson

Has refused to budge from his £20 million state-funded mansion. He remained at the luxury official residence, despite resigning as foreign secretary

He has raked in thousands from renting out a home just four miles away in Islington, North London, while he lived rent-free

It would cost him £1,321.48 a day to rent the property from the queen

Get rid of the union leaders

FILES RELEASED by the National Archives show that as home secretary in Harold Wilson's Labour government, James Callaghan was deeply concerned about the rise of a new generation of "politically motivated" union leaders.

In 1969 he secretly urged officials to find ways of ousting leftwing trade union leaders "by one means or another".

In response to his call, senior officials suggested undermining those with suspected communist leanings through "inspired leakages" to the press.

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Fascists back Robinson as appeal judgement looms

by ALISTAIR FARROW

JAILED NAZI Tommy Robinson appealed against his conviction on Wednesday of last week.

He was sent down after admitting contempt of court for filming on the steps of courts in Leeds and Canterbury. The judgement on his appeal was reserved and will probably be delivered before the end of July, Court of Appeal judges said.

Robinson is currently serving a 13-month sentence. That means he could be released before Christmas if he is released on licence.

If his appeal is successful, it will be much sooner. Fascists and racists will take to the streets to celebrate.

Robinson has been bankrolled by US far right "think tanks," it emerged recently. The Middle East Forum (MEF) said it had given Robinson a five-figure sum to cover his legal costs.

"We are aware of three to four other groups and there is also a Tommy Robinson Defence Fund," said Gregg Roman from the organisation.

The MEF also admitted to funding the costs of two recent "Free Tommy" demonstrations in London.

Raheem Kassam, a British member of the organisation, said the costs came to "£10,000 to £15,000 per event". Kassam floated the idea of starting "a new political party".

Vote

A poll conducted by The Sunday Times newspaper found 24 percent of people in Britain would vote for "a party of the political far right, committed to opposing Islamism and immigration and supporting Brexit".

Ukip leader Gerard Batten has opened his arms to far right recruits and Ukip's youth membership has increased by half. Racist Paul Watson of the far right Info Wars conspiracy



NAZIS AND racists at a Defend Tommy Robinson protest in London earlier this month

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

BACK STORY

Nazi Tommy Robinson could be released from jail within months

● An appeal against his conviction for contempt of court is likely to be delivered before the end of July

● Robinson was jailed in May after filming outside courts in Leeds and Canterbury

● US far right groups have admitted funding Robinson's legal costs and protests in his support

● Fascists and racists will celebrate when he is released—anti-fascists must oppose them

theory website joined to launch a "soft coup".

Other far right figures have joined as well.

The far right in Britain is in a state of flux. Clarity over the shifts taking place is important. But the fascists and racists must be met on the streets and stopped.

Examples of that strategy came on Saturday in Worcester, Cambridge and Glasgow.

The Nazi English Defence League (EDL) was outnumbered by up to 500 counter-protesters in Worcester. Only 20 EDL members turned up.

Worcester trades union council and anti-racist groups assembled

where the EDL was due to rally.

Young Muslims, activists and onlookers confronted them. EDL supporters ended up being led away with a police escort.

When Robinson is released the thousands of fascists and racists that have mobilised to demand his freedom will come out once more.

Anti-fascists have shown they can mobilise—and they will need to do so again.

Thanks to Geoff Dexter

On other pages

Reports from Glasgow and Cambridge >> pages 4&5

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Dangers in Corbyn speech

JEREMY CORBYN launched Labour's "Build it in Britain" strategy on Tuesday.

There were welcome promises on better pay for workers, action on housing, green production and a commitment to challenge European Union state aid rules.

But it was all wrapped up in economic nationalism—and there's nothing progressive about British bosses rather than foreign ones.

Corbyn made a point that new ships to supply the Royal Navy battle fleet cost £1 billion.

But the point isn't that

they should be built in Britain, but that they shouldn't be built at all.

Before the speech Labour briefed that Corbyn would attack the use of "cheap labour from abroad"—a reference to migrant workers in Britain. In fact he spoke of "cheap labour abroad", a less dangerous formula, although still suggesting that workers should see those in other countries as competitors.

Across the world rulers say they will make their countries "great again" by beating down others.

Labour should have nothing to do with such divisive views.



Jeremy Corbyn



>>>From page one

"angry at the effect this is going to have on them".

"People are going to struggle to pay their mortgage, pay their bills, see their children," she said.

"It's going to be a big loss."

Cuts to this vital service will make it harder for Birmingham's residents to access it.

The care packages that remain will be sold to the private sector.

One of the carers' demands is the ability to "self roster" as this would give workers more choice over which shifts they work.

Election

Mandy said that many councillors supported the demand, but "they pulled the plug on it after the election".

She added that this fight isn't just about saving jobs or protecting conditions but is about "protecting the service".

"The citizens of

Birmingham are getting half the service they were 12 months ago," she said. "These cuts will attack if further."

Join the strike rally

Tuesday 31 July, 9.30am til 11am, Birmingham Town Hall, Victoria Square B3 3DQ.

● Send messages of support to info@birminghamunison.co.uk

Make cheques payable to Birmingham Unison and make clear it's for the hardship fund. Contact Birmingham Unison to arrange a home carer to speak at your union meeting

IN THIS WEEK

1972

National dock strike begins

THOUSANDS of dockers in Britain began a national strike on 28 July 1972.

The government declared a state of emergency within days. The action pushed back redundancies and won changes in conditions.



Fascists routed across Britain, now keep up the pressure

A VIBRANT march of up to 1,000 people saw off a rag tag collection of Tommy Robinson supporters in Cambridge on Saturday.

The unity protest was organised by Cambridge Stand Up to Racism and Unite Against Fascism.

It was supported by a host of trade unions, political parties, community organisations and musicians.

Before marching, the anti-fascists gathered to hear local performers and speakers.

Cambridge Labour MP Daniel Zeichner said, “There is no place in Cambridge’s proudly diverse, multicultural and multi-faith community for the sort of racism espoused by Robinson and many of his supporters.”

He said he was proud to stand alongside Mohammed Mahmood from Mill Road mosque, whose speech was greeted with huge applause.

Steve Hedley, senior assistant general secretary of the RMT union, explained why he was determined to continue to protest.

He said, “They want to control the streets, intimidate people to not come out and oppose them.

“But we are RMT, FBU members, construction workers, and we will oppose them in numbers.”

Riccardo la Torre, Fire Brigades Union (FBU) Eastern Regional Secretary, and Denise Christie, Scottish Secretary of the FBU, also spoke.

United

Riccardo said, “I am full of hope looking round this crowd. We defeat them when we are united and strong”.

Tom Holliday from the Bfawu union explained how racism can be used to divide and weaken workers.

“In the Fast Food Rights and McStrike campaigns, we organise

BACK STORY

Nazis and the far right are trying to regroup around calls to free jailed fascist leader Tommy Robinson

● Some 15,000 people marched in central London to demand his release in June

● And around 7,000 racists marched for him again in July

● But 2,000 opposed them—and Nazis were outnumbered this weekend

● United opposition can stop them

as migrant workers, as black and white, as every creed or colour,” he said.

“And we have to oppose racist division”.

At one point the Tommy Robinson supporters, numbering less than 40, tried to disrupt the anti-fascist rally but they were quickly seen off.

There then followed a triumphant anti-racist march around Cambridge.

Before the anti-fascists dispersed, Michael Bradley of Stand Up To Racism stressed that it is vital to mobilise anti-racists in every community and every workplace.

Anywhere the racists try to sow seeds of division and hate, they can be opposed.

Paul Sillett of Unite Against Fascism warned that, while the fascists had a very bad day, the fight against them is far from won.

We will have to continue to be active and alert to the very real threat the revival of fascism poses across Britain, Europe and beyond.

On other pages...

➔ Putin Trump in his place >>Page 15



Uniting against fascism in Cambridge

PICTURES: STAND UP TO RACISM



SEEING OFF the Nazis in Glasgow

PICTURES: ANDREW MCGOWAN

Glasgow protest beats back rump of the Nazi Scottish Defence League

GLASGOW SAW a magnificent response to the planned Scottish Defence League mobilisation in George Square on Saturday.

Over 250 people assembled to show their defiance and make sure fascists could not walk through the city without a challenge. Only 40 Nazis turned up.

On the anti-fascist side there were representatives and banners from the Unison, Unite and Bfawu unions. The Scottish National Party, the Labour Party and the Green Party were all well represented.

Cheryl, a Unite member from Glasgow, said, “The unions have a proud tradition in the fight against fascism and we can see that here today in this really impressive turnout. The role

of trade unions in this fight is crucial in chasing the Nazis off our streets.”

Previously the Nazis haven’t been able to muster anything except a small group of Scotland’s rejects. But the size

of recent fascist mobilisations in England meant there was the possibility of an increase in their numbers.

The only sign of any football lads came from Celtic’s Green Brigade, who took direct action

against the Nazis as they tried to assemble in George Square.



The myth that Scotland does not have a racism problem was addressed by Charlotte Ahmed, an anti-racism campaigner and a member of the EIS education union. She said, “The idea that somehow Scotland is less racist than the rest of the UK is untrue.

“We saw last week an Asian member of the Scottish parliament was racially abused in the street and in Edinburgh a man pled guilty to the racially aggravated attempted murder of a young Syrian refugee.

“The worry is that the political chaos around Brexit and the effects of austerity means we need to continue to confront them on the streets while they are still small.”

Thanks to Geoff Dexter, Richard Rose, Julie Sherry, Jim Main, Andrew McGowan, Drew McEwan, Raymie Kiernan and everyone who sent pictures and reports from Worcester, Cambridge and Glasgow

Oxford walk unites against racism after violent attack

OVER 120 people attended a Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) community walk against racism in Bury Knowle Park, Headington, Oxford on Sunday.

It followed a racist attack where a 35 year old man who was racially abused, punched in the head three times and knocked to the ground.

The event was supported by all sections of the community with Anneliese Dodds MP, several Labour councillors, trade unionists and local residents attending.

A short rally following the walk celebrated Oxford’s diversity and vowed to unite and mobilise against racism



The walk in Bury Knowle Park

PICTURE JULIE SIMMONS

and racist attacks whenever they occur.

Everyone should be able to use our parks without fear. SUTR condemned the ongoing scapegoating of migrants, Muslims and refugees by

sections of the media and mainstream politicians that give racists confidence.

We want a mass anti-racist movement that can help stop racist attacks.

Julie Simmons

The charity Tell Mama recorded an increase in Islamophobic graffiti

Islamophobic incidents on the increase, charity finds

Islamophobic street incidents rose in 2017, a report from a leading anti-racist charity has indicated.

Some 839 “street level” Islamophobic incidents were reported to Tell Mama in 2017—up from 643 the year before.

The charity’s annual report also found that the majority of victims of Islamophobic incidents were women.

And it said the amount of Islamophobic vandalism it had recorded had also risen.

Tell Mama describes street incidents as

something that “occurred in person between a victim or property and a perpetrator.”

It also found that the number of “online” incidents—Islamophobic hate speech on the internet—had increased.

But the charity said this increase should be seen as part of a wider trend “where there has been a more marked shift towards more serious offline incidents such as physical attacks, threatening behaviour and abuse more generally.”

Tell Mama director

Iman Atta said, “More than ever, we need to come together and redouble our efforts against those who seek to divide and play communities off against each other”.

Tell Mama founder Fiyaz Mughal said the rise was “partly driven by terrorism, partly by groups who just want to divide communities, we have social media and we have politicians who seek to blame migrants.

“Anti-Muslim rhetoric is bleeding into the political landscape—it emboldens people.”

Socialist Worker WHAT WE THINK

AS MAY CLINGS ON—DON’T WAIT TO DRIVE HER OUT

IN WHAT she probably regards as a great achievement, Theresa May has made it through to parliament’s summer break. She avoided both a vote of no confidence from fellow Tories and defeats by MPs.

True, this was possible only by dumping essential elements of her own tortuously-constructed white paper.

It also meant cheating over the “pairing” arrangements for Commons votes, persuading a handful of Labour MPs to back her and wilfully ignoring inconvenient questions such as the Irish border. But she survived.

The only problem remaining now is that what has emerged will be unacceptable to the people she has to negotiate with—the 27 other European Union (EU) countries.

“I am not negotiating, of course, on the basis of the white paper,” said Michel Barnier, the EU’s chief Brexit negotiator.

The EU will bully and squeeze the British government and demand further concessions.

It cannot allow the idea to spread that it is easy or profitable to leave the EU because that

would put other governments under pressure to depart.

Big business will command May to do whatever is necessary to secure the best environment for making money. And she will be tempted to obey.

As the Financial Times newspaper notes, the negotiations to date show that, “The EU holds the highest cards. On every issue of substance, the UK has folded.”

But if May does concede, then the 70 or more MPs in Jacob Rees-Mogg’s European Research Group will step up cries of betrayal and block a deal in parliament. Such forces will use the Tory conference to harass May and demand more. And it

“She has avoided a defeat, but created the conditions for catastrophe

will all be entwined with endless speculation about a looming leadership contest.

As so often, May has avoided a defeat, but created the conditions for her party’s catastrophe and splits more fundamental than anything for decades.

Turmoil is guaranteed. The issue is whether the working class will gain from it. Ukip and the far right hope to benefit from the Brexit chaos—they must be stopped.

But the opposition to the Tories over Brexit cannot be left to those who do so on the basis of support for the neoliberal, racist EU.

They plan a major protest at the Tory conference in Birmingham in September.

But we need a break both from the EU and the Tories’ appalling version of Brexit.

That’s why it is very important that the Midlands TUC has called a demonstration at the Tory conference. Everyone who is against racism and austerity—whatever their view on Brexit—should be on it.

March and rally at the Tory conference, Saturday 29 September, 11am, Victoria Square, Birmingham. For details go to bit.ly/BhamToryDemo

TORY NHS RACISM EXPOSED

NHS WORKERS are handing back medals they won for fighting the Ebola crisis in west Africa. Presenting the medals in 2015, then Tory prime minister David Cameron said Britain owed the volunteers “an immense debt of gratitude”.

About 20 British doctors, nurses and midwives are returning them in protest at Theresa May and the Tories’ “hostile environment” for migrants.

The health workers point to extra eligibility checks that bar

migrants from accessing many free NHS services.

It is hypocrisy for the Tories to celebrate the heroic efforts of health workers abroad, while structuring the NHS so migrants are unable to seek healthcare in Britain.

Their concern for residents of west Africa, or any other migrants, stops at the British border.

Paediatrician Neal Russell called the policies “unethical and inhumane” and said, “I know of patients with infectious diseases,

including TB, who have been deterred from accessing care, and who have later died.”

Stopping migrants from using the NHS is not a side effect of the extra checks put into practice in 2014 and 2017, but its purpose.

The real threat to the NHS is not migrants, who are responsible for building it.

The true culprits are the vicious Tories who hold working class life in such disregard they cut the NHS until it’s at breaking point.





ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



Fight antisemitism, not Corbyn's Labour

IF YOU want to make sense of the row about Jeremy Corbyn and antisemitism you have above all to understand that it has nothing to do with antisemitism. If the likes of Margaret Hodge wanted to combat antisemitism, there are a couple of things that happened last week that should be of concern.

First of all Gottfried Waldhäusl, a minister in the state government in Lower Austria, announced a plan to make Jews register individually in order to buy kosher meat. This is a terrifying move in Hitler's homeland, where he learned his antisemitism and where the Final Solution was rigorously implemented. Waldhäusl is a member of the Nazi Freedom Party, which participates in Austria's federal government.

Then on Thursday last week the Hungarian prime minister, Viktor Orban, met his Israeli counterpart, Binyamin Netanyahu, in Jerusalem. The thoroughly pro-Israel Washington Post said that Orban has "seemingly courted his country's right-wing antisemites: A key plank of his successful April re-election bid centred on his loathing for Jewish American financier George Soros, whom Orban scapegoated as a national menace for his support of liberal NGOs in Hungary."

One Orban speech had this classically antisemitic passage: "We are fighting an enemy that is different from us. Not open, but hiding; not straightforward but crafty; not honest but base; not national but international; does not believe in working but speculates with money; does not have its own homeland but feels it owns the whole world."

The fact that Netanyahu met the author of this filth shows the extent to which the charge of antisemitism is a tool of Israeli state policy, to be used selectively and where convenient. Netanyahu is placing himself in the axis of far right governments orchestrated by Donald Trump and including Orban in Hungary, Matteo Salvini in Italy, and Sebastian Kurz in Austria. Meanwhile, Orban has been given a free pass from future accusations of antisemitism.

Anyone who was really worried about antisemitism would be concentrating on building as powerful as possible an international movement to resist and ultimately to destroy this axis. Instead the right wing leaders of organisations such as the Board of Deputies are in alliance with the Tories and right wing Labour MPs, and are targeting Corbyn.

Condemning

Their ostensible reason is that last week the Labour national executive adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) "working definition" of antisemitism. But it left out the examples included with the definition because, among other things, they equate condemning Israel as racist with antisemitism. This is why the annual meeting of the civil rights organisation Liberty passed a motion condemning the IHRA definition—something I have yet to see reported.

This exposes the two real motivations of Corbyn's critics. One is to weaken him and keep him constantly on the defensive. The other is to protect Israel from criticism.

From the latter point of view, the timing of the latest assault on Corbyn is striking. Last week the Israeli parliament passed a law proclaiming Israel "the national home of the Jewish people", asserting that only Jews have the right to national self-determination there, and demoting Arabic from the status of an official language. It is a document of old-style ethnic nationalism that confirms the Israeli Arab minority as an inferior subject people.

This is very much the kind of nationalism practised by Orban, even if Jews, along with Muslims, are among the targets of his version. But would criticism of this law as racist fall victim to the IHRA definition of antisemitism?

The fear that it might may well give pause to many politicians looking over their shoulders at the media.

All in all, the Israeli government has turned a crisis into an opportunity. It has reacted to the potentially disastrous election of a Labour Party leader who supports the Palestinians by backing a campaign that has successfully driven Labour onto the defensive.

This is an astute piece of what the Russians call political technology. But for anyone who sincerely wants to fight antisemitism it is quite contemptible. The Labour furor distracts attention from real far right antisemitism.

THE BENEFITS system is riddled with errors

Universal Credit is harmful, admit call centre workers

by SADIE ROBINSON

FORMER BENEFITS workers have spoken out against Universal Credit (UC). The Tories say UC, which combines six benefits into one, is about simplifying the system. In reality it's aimed at making life harder for claimants—and acting as a threat to non-claimants.

Two workers told the Guardian newspaper that the new system is harming claimants. Joanne Higgins worked on a UC helpline in Grimsby. She said it felt like the claimants were "not important" but instead are people who "get in the way of" hitting targets.

"It was more about getting the person off the phone, not helping," she said.

Bayard Tarpley also worked in the Grimsby centre. He said that mistakes in processing claims are built into the system because it is so complicated. "It is having an actively harmful effect on a huge number of claimants," he said.

Over three million claimants will start to be moved onto UC next year. Eventually it will involve eight million claimants. Fury over the impact on claimants forced work and pensions secretary Esther McVey to admit last week "things might not be going right" with UC.

She retreated in a row over backdating payments to

70,000 ill and disabled claimants who have lost money due to errors. The claimants were underpaid by between £5,000 and £20,000 between 2011 and 2016.

McVey wanted to limit backdating of payments to October 2014, but has now said they will be backdated to 2011.

The retreat followed a report from a group of MPs that attacked the Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) "culture of indifference" towards UC claimants.

Esther McVey

The report said the DWP knew of the errors in 2014 but at first tried to blame claimants.

McVey hopes her surrender will help dissipate some of the anger and resistance over UC. But the Tories have only retreated when they have been forced to. It's right to keep fighting them.

The Disabled People Against Cuts (Dpac) group held a solidarity summit in London last Sunday. It was in response to Britain co-hosting the Global Disability Summit in London this week.

The Reclaiming Our Futures Alliance, which includes Dpac, said it had "concerns" over Britain's involvement in the event.

"The government has been found responsible for grave and systemic violations of disabled people's rights due to welfare reform," it said.

It added that the Tories wanted to use the summit to "divert attention and opposition" to their attacks.

Widespread anger over UC means the Tories are unlikely to get away with their attempts to pose as friends of disabled people and claimants. We need to keep the pressure on them—not just to get rid of the worst aspects of UC, but to scrap it altogether.

Grenfell action needed

SURVIVORS OF the Grenfell Tower fire remain unhoused, despite 133 council homes in Kensington and Chelsea sitting empty because of council inaction.

Nearly two thirds of the homes lie empty because they need repair work.

And last week the Housing, Communities and Local Government committee released a report calling for the government

to take serious action.

It calls for the removal of flammable cladding from all buildings.

"The ban should apply not only to new high-rise residential buildings, but also to existing buildings and those currently under construction,"

reads the

committee's report.

The Tories are unlikely to act on the report without more

pressure from below.



Fighting for justice



Got a story?

Email ideas to reports@socialistworker.co.uk

New racist laws expose reality of Israeli state

New laws are no aberration, but a consequence of a state based on ethnic cleansing, writes Nick Clark

ISRAEL POUNDED the Gaza Strip with yet more airstrikes last weekend—just days after passing a new law that confirmed its existence as a racist state.

Four people were killed by Israel's assault—the latest in an escalation of violence against Palestinians that began in March this year.

Israel has routinely shot and killed Palestinians as they protest along the border fence that holds them in. They are trapped in Gaza, which has been under siege for more than a decade. One Palestinian protester died from his wounds on Monday after being shot on an earlier protest.

In a separate incident Israeli soldiers killed 15 year old Arkan Thaer Mezher during a raid on a refugee camp in Bethlehem early on Monday morning.

Last weekend's airstrikes came after a Palestinian sniper shot one of the Israeli soldiers enforcing the siege.

The soldier is the only Israeli to have been killed in "clashes" with Palestinians in Gaza since March. In contrast, 147 Palestinians have been killed in the protests—often by snipers.

Appearances

Speaking after the airstrikes, Israeli defence minister Avigdor Lieberman hinted at a massacre of civilians in Gaza.

"We will have to embark on a broad and painful military operation, not only for appearances," he said. "Residents of Gaza will be among those who will have to pay the price."

His words came just days after his government passed a law entrenching discrimination against Arabs into its constitution.

The new "nation state" bill says that only Jewish people have the right to self-determination in the land that is formally Israel.

It implicitly denies the same right to the Palestinians who have lived there for hundreds of years before Israel was founded in 1948.

The law also scraps Arabic as

BACK STORY

147 Palestinians have been killed on protests since March

- Just one Israeli soldier has been killed
- New laws passed last week mean only Jewish people have the right to self-determination in the land that is formally Israel
- This means that Palestinians are excluded even further
- The law also removes Arabic as an official language of Israel
- It is a racist law for a state that is racist to its core

an official language of Israel, and insists that all of Jerusalem is the Israeli capital.

As a "basic law" it is treated as a part of Israel's constitution. It further solidifies the already deep, institutional racism in Israel.

Majority

Israel was founded through a process of ethnic cleansing that saw 850,000 Palestinians driven from their homes to ensure the new state had an ethnic majority.

An array of racist laws discriminate against Palestinians in Israel, and prevent those outside Israel from returning. The new law is explicitly designed to ensure Israel keeps that majority amid fears that Palestinians may one day outnumber Israelis.

Israeli prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu confirmed this by saying the racist legislation reaffirmed the principles on which Israel was founded.

"With this law we determined the founding principle of our existence," he said.

Suhad Banna, who lives in the city of Tel Aviv, said the legislation made her feel like a "class B citizen".

"The ironic thing is that Israel is calling itself a democratic state," she said. "I have no idea how it's a democratic state after this bill. What democratic state are they are talking about?"



THE CAMPAIGN Against Antisemitism demonstration last week

Antisemitism row reveals hypocrisy of right wing Labour Party members

ISRAEL'S NEW apartheid law comes as the right to call Israel racist is under attack in Britain.

Jeremy Corbyn and the Labour Party have been smeared as antisemites for adopting a definition of antisemitism that allows its members to say Israel is a racist state.

Labour Party MPs are trying to force the party to adopt a definition of antisemitism that says "suggesting that the existence of a state of Israel is a racist endeavour" is an example of antisemitism.

Right wing Labour MP Margaret Hodge called Corbyn "a fucking antisemite and a racist" in parliament last week.

And over 200 people rallied outside parliament last Thursday to label Corbyn and the Labour Party as "institutionally antisemitic".

The protest was called by the Campaign Against Antisemitism (CAA).

The group was set up in the wake of Israel's war on Gaza in 2014 and calls the Palestine Solidarity Campaign antisemitic.

The crowd—some of them

from Friends of Israel groups—waved British and Israeli flags.

Euan Philipps spoke from a group called Labour Against Antisemitism. It has tweeted that anti-Zionism—opposition to Israel's racist founding ideology—is a form of antisemitism.

Philipps said the idea that it's antisemitic to call Israel racist was "core" to how he identified antisemitism. He added that criticism of Israel is "key" to what he called "left wing antisemitism".

"People like Jeremy Corbyn are only interested in demonising Israel," he said.

Protected

CAA director Stephen Silverman said that by allowing members to call Israel racist, "In the Labour Party the right to be antisemitic is now protected and even encouraged."

Others implied that Corbyn's long-standing support for Palestinians had caused antisemitism to grow inside Labour.

Tory Lord Stuart Polack said, "When Jeremy Corbyn got

elected as leader of the Labour Party some people in my party said that's good news.

"I said that's not good news because his views are going to be brought into the centre of the Labour Party."

Others went further and claimed Corbyn encouraged violence against Jewish people—and even compared him to Nazis.

Silverman said, "When this translates into physical attacks on Jews in this country, the finger will be pointed at Jeremy Corbyn."

Philipps described Corbyn's position as "the politics of the 1930s"—a reference to fascism.

And Mark Lewis—a defamation lawyer—made the defamatory accusation that Corbyn "is a racist and he leads a racist party."

"Anyone who supports it is supporting racism."

He also said allowing Corbyn to define antisemitism was "like asking Nick Griffin to define racism so that the BNP is not racist".

And he finished his speech with an imagined story that ended with the former mayor of London Ken Livingstone shouting "Sieg Heil" and performing a Nazi salute.

The rally showed the depths that supporters of Israel will go to smear critics of Israel. Israel's latest racist law shows exactly why the right to criticise it has to be defended.



Margaret Hodge



Assad army on verge of victory in Syrian war

Assad's regime has almost finished off the last pockets of resistance in southern Syria, says Nick Clark

THE SYRIAN regime this week looked set to wipe out the last pocket of rebels in the south of the country, marking a victory for president Bashar al-Assad's counter-revolution.

The last rebel fighters in south west Syria, near the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, were evacuating as Socialist Worker went to press. Many of them have been allowed to leave and go to another rebel-controlled area in the north west.

Thousands of Syrian refugees are now trapped at the borders between Syria, Jordan and the Golan Heights.

Israel and Jordan—both strong allies of the US and Britain—have refused to take in refugees fleeing the fighting in southern Syria.

Yet in a highly-publicised operation, the Israeli military did help to evacuate members of the White Helmets, an organisation that responds to regime airstrikes.

Volunteers of the organisation, known officially as the Syrian Civil Defence, were taken to Jordan.

The Israeli military described the evacuation as an “exceptional humanitarian gesture”.

The British government—which locks out thousands of refugees at its borders in northern France—has offered asylum to 500 White Helmets.

Evacuation

In a self-congratulatory tweet British foreign secretary Jeremy Hunt said, “Fantastic news that we—UK and friends—have secured evacuation of White Helmets and their families.

“Thank you Israel and Jordan for acting so quickly on our request.”

Trained by former British spy and army officer James Le Mesurier, the White Helmets have received hundreds of millions of pounds from Western governments.

They are one of a number of groups in Syria set up or cynically backed by competing imperial forces to further their own interests.

The Assad regime sought to crush the popular revolution in 2011 by bombarding the towns, cities and

BACK STORY

The Syrian revolution began as a genuine revolutionary movement from below

● Now the Assad regime, backed by Russia, is set to defeat it

● Western promises of support for rebels have disappeared after years of fighting

● Now Israeli militias are manoeuvring along the border with Syria

villages that were the sites of mass demonstrations.

Armed groups—known collectively as the Free Syrian Army (FSA)—formed to defend the protests but soon became the focus of resistance to the regime.

It was a genuine revolution, part of the Arab Spring.

Competing

As the fighting continued, many FSA groups came to depend on support and funding from competing regional and global powers.

Israeli newspaper Haaretz reported on Monday how Israel is trying to use a militia known as the Knights of the Golan to gain a foothold in Syrian territory.

Israel invaded the Syrian Golan Heights in 1967, then later annexed it. Now it is worried that Assad's counter-revolution will bring Syrian and Iranian soldiers close to the border.

After the rebels' defeat, the Syrian army is supposed to fall back along a separation zone. But the Knights will still be allowed to operate inside the zone.

Meanwhile other rebel fighters in the south have been abandoned by the West. The US told rebel groups not to “base your decisions on the assumption or expectation of a military intervention by us”.

Their defeat and abandonment blows apart the idea that the Syrian revolution could have relied on the support of imperialism against the regime.

AS THE forces of the Syrian regime near victory, cities such as Homs (above) lie in ruins

FRANCE

Did Macron cover up for bodyguard?

by CHARLIE KIMBER

FRENCH PRESIDENT Emmanuel Macron is under pressure over allegations of a cover-up of an assault on protesters by one of his close aides.

Macron's top bodyguard and confidant, Alexandre Benalla, was placed under investigation on Sunday for allegedly assaulting protesters at a May Day demonstration. He is not a policeman but was wearing a police helmet and insignia.

Benalla is seen on a video

threatening, hitting and stamping on a young man who can be heard begging him to stop. A second video shows Benalla violently wrestling a young woman to the ground.

But the bigger story may be how Macron and interior minister Gerard Collomb dealt with the issue.

Presidential spokespeople said

Collomb—“Nothing to see here”

Benalla had been punished with a two-week suspension from his post in May. But photos indicate him continuing to accompany Macron on official visits.

Le Monde newspaper also claimed that Benalla was given the use of a luxurious apartment and provided with a car and chauffeur after he was suspended.

Several French media outlets reported that Collomb had been aware of the assault video the day after it was filmed, but said nothing.



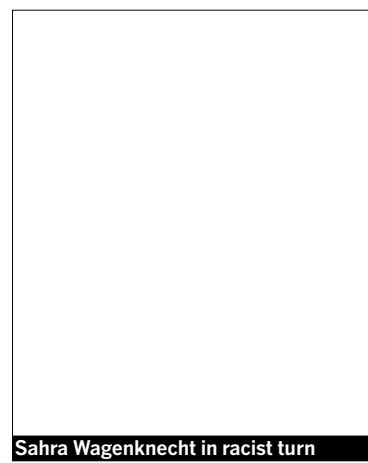
Section of German left turns against refugees

A SECTION of the German left has taken the disastrous decision to make massive concessions to racists over immigration.

A new movement is to be launched shortly that says it will combine anti-austerity policies with harsher barriers to migration and tougher “law and order” policies.

It will be headed by Sahra Wagenknecht, presently chair of left wing party Die Linke.

It will include former and current members of the Social Democratic and Green parties, and prominent academics such as the sociologist Wolfgang Streeck.



Sahra Wagenknecht in racist turn

This is seen as a clever way to undermine growing support for the far right AfD party.

But it will validate their filth and drag politics further to the right.

The right response to racism has been seen in a series of over 30 demonstrations in the last few weeks against the government's asylum restrictions and the AfD.

They were supported by many members of Die Linke.

Last Saturday up to 50,000 people joined a protest in Munich against the CSU party—part of the governing coalition—and its demands to “close the borders” to refugees.

Hodge and the Nazis

IT'S SICKENING to hear right wing Labour MP Margaret Hodge take credit for beating the fascist British National Party in Barking, east London in 2010.

It wasn't down to her — it was the work of hundreds of activists in Unite Against Fascism (UAF) leafleting, petitioning, canvassing and organising events which defeated the Nazis.

Hodge acknowledged UAF's role at the time, but turned out to have a short memory. She also seems to have forgotten how much she had fed the monster by banging on about immigration.

If anyone needs to question their anti-racist credentials, it's the right wingers like her who legitimised the BNP's lies.

Dave Sewell
South London

Hypocrisy on Israeli state

ON THE same day that Margaret Hodge levelled false accusations against Jeremy Corbyn of antisemitism for dropping criticism of the state of Israel as an example of antisemitism as part of Labour's code of conduct, Israel proved itself that it is a racist endeavour.

Two bills are going through the Israeli parliament. One is to legally segregate Jewish and Arab areas. The second is to stop organisations critical of the Israeli Defence Force from entering schools.

I don't believe Hodge is naive. I think she is a liar.

John Curtis
Ipswich

Racism that wrecks lives and boosts Nazis

ON MY way to an appeal against the deportation of Mustafa, a young Afghani ex-student, I picked up the City A.M. newspaper.

The editorial, concerned with potential weaknesses of a post-Brexit economy, stated, "A huge increase in the number of working-age people would help, but political realities prevent this coming from migration."

In court the Home Office representative argued that the young

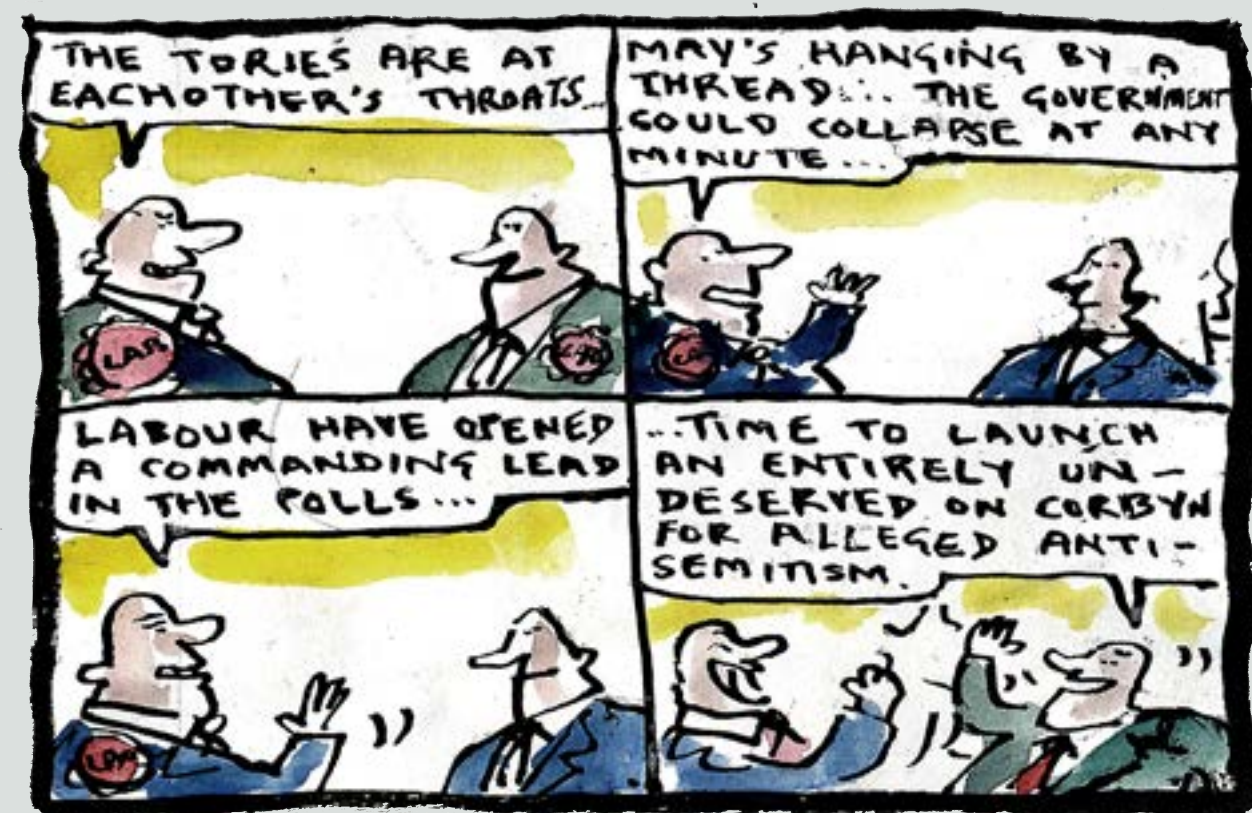


ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

Trump demos showed we can win against the racists

OXFORDSHIRE SAW a fantastic outpouring of anger against Trump's visit to the UK.

Over 3,000 people protested against Trump being feted by Theresa May and Britain's elite at Blenheim Palace on the day of his arrival.

Protesters were spread out on opposite sides of the road with traffic running through the middle so May's dinner guests arrived to angry chants of "Shame on you."

Protesting cyclists helped slow down the cars so guests crawled past protesters.

After three hours we finished with a march around Woodstock town centre.

On Friday we protested at

Chequers and then went on to join the brilliant protest in London. Hundreds more made their own way direct to the march.

The protests against Trump showed we can build mass mobilisations against racism.

This is essential because we face a rising problem with racism, the far right and fascists in Britain.

In the build-up to and during the Trump protests we argued for people to come to the London protest against the racists who are supporting the Nazi Tommy Robinson, and won an important minority to do so.

But we need more.

Racism is a growing problem. Earlier this month a 35 year old man was racially abused and then

punched in the head three times and knocked to the ground in an Oxford park.

The victim was left with a broken nose and suspected fractured cheek bone.

Oxford Stand Up To Racism held a vigil against the attack.

We need those who mobilised against Trump to join us in challenging racism wherever it raises its head.

If we succeed in getting the people who protested against Trump to fight racism consistently on the scale we saw last week we would smash the confidence of bigots, the far right and the fascists to bits.

Julie Simmons
Oxford

Woodcock should face a by-election

I'M DELIGHTED that Barrow MP John Woodcock has left Labour.

Woodcock has been a consistent opponent of Jeremy Corbyn, frequently damning him for not supporting nuclear weapons. He said that Labour was "fucked" under Corbyn's leadership.

Now Woodcock says he is prepared to vote with the Conservatives "if required".

He has been sitting as an independent since having the Labour whip withdrawn in April

Woodcock won't be missed

pending investigation of an allegation of sexual harassment towards a former staff member.

Woodcock's resignation means the investigation

cannot be concluded.

He has also been a special friend of the Turkish autocrat Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Woodcock visited Turkey and was hosted by a pro-government propaganda company.

Even more chillingly, he met the fascist MHP party.

If Woodcock had any decency he would now resign and allow a by-election to take place.

Let's see how popular he really is.

Sally Barnes
Manchester

Just a thought...

Drive out the Labour right

SOME Labour MPs are threatening to sit as independents, a process that has been started by John Woodcock.

Others would undoubtedly be open to Tory Anna Soubry's call for a "government of national unity".

I'm glad when these right wingers reveal themselves as traitors. It means they can be replaced by Jeremy Corbyn supporters.

My bigger worry is the ones who stay—and who will undermine a Corbyn government.

Susan Palmer
West London

New health minister stinks

THE MINISTER for health and social care after Jeremy Hunt's departure is Matt Hancock.

In 2015, he received a £5,000 donation from Gurdev Dadral, director of a private nursing agency supplying agency workers to compensate for NHS understaffing.

It's small beer compared to the nine donations (worth £32,000) that he has received from Neil Record, chair of the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA). IEA spokespeople have called for NHS privatisation.

John Murphy
Stockport

Don't forget Irish victory

I WAS pleased to read the article about the 1918 Isle of Man general strike recently (Socialist Worker, 11 July).

But I was startled to see it described as "the only successful general strike waged to date in the islands of Great Britain and Ireland".

What about the general strike in Ireland on 23 April 1918, which succeeded in stopping the British state from conscripting Irishmen into the First World War?

Lin Clark
Bristol

A tale of two referendums

YOU OPPOSE a second referendum on Brexit, but are keen to have another one on Scottish independence. You can't have it both ways.

Linda McCarthy
North London

A PRIME SUSPECT

THE TRUTH ABOUT BILLIONAIRE AMAZON BOSS JEFF BEZOS

Simon Basketter looks at where the richest man in modern history got his money from, what he's wasting it on—and the reality of life for Amazon workers

JEFF BEZOS is the richest man in the world. His wealth officially reached an obscene £116 billion last week.

Profiles of the Amazon boss make much of the rags to riches story of the Princeton graduate who made a killing on a hedge fund. He used his own ill-gotten gains and a £235,000 gift from his impoverished parents when he started Amazon.

Media profiles talk of how frugal he is. Bezos is currently spending £30 million building a clock inside a hollowed-out mountain that he owns in Texas.

It is a “symbol for long-term thinking” and he claims it is meant to last 10,000 years. Just for fun a mechanical cuckoo will pop out of a hole every 1,000 years.

Bezos said, “In the year 4,000, you'll go see this clock and you'll wonder, ‘Why on Earth did they build this?’” Perhaps people will ask even earlier than that.

His business empire makes Bezos the 25th largest landowner in the US, and he owns at least five houses in the US.

This includes two adjacent properties in Beverly Hills, California. A four-bedroom home with a swimming pool is worth £9.5 million. Then there's an £18 million, 28,000-square-foot mansion complete with tennis courts and a six-car garage.

In 2012, Bezos purchased four linked apartments worth a collective

HOW RICH?

Bezos has grabbed £38 billion in 2018—so far. That's £2,275 per second. He bought the Washington Post newspaper in 2013 for £192 million—less than what he now makes in a day. He can now spend £7 million a day until he is 100

HOW POOR?

Bezos made as much money as the combined income of every Amazon fulfilment centre worker in the world in 2017. In five days in 2018, Bezos' wealth divided equally among Amazon's workers works out at £231,000 each

WE COULD SPEND IT...

The United Nations estimates it would cost £23 billion to solve world hunger for a year. The World Health Organisation says just £8.5 billion would halve the number of people who don't have access to clean water



£12.5 million in an Art Deco building in Central Park, New York.

His latest home is a former Textile Museum in Washington, which he bought for £18 million and is having converted into a house.

His frugality also extends to a top-of-the-line, £50 million private jet, the 2015 Gulfstream G-650ER.

The jet is of course technically owned by a holding company—Poplar Glen—just to optimise the taxation.

In 1994 Bezos quit his hedge fund to found a company that could ride the growth of the early commercial internet. He originally thought of calling the firm Relentless.

Collecting

Bezos said that Amazon intended to sell books as a way of gathering data on affluent, educated shoppers. After collecting data on millions of customers, Amazon could figure out how to sell everything else on the internet.

Taxes are airbrushed away. For years, Amazon fought furiously against paying sales taxes where it had no warehouses—and even where it did.

A growing part of Amazon is now its web server hosting—storing stuff on the internet. Because after the firm has collected all the data, it needs somewhere to store it.

Amazon hosts the web servers for the US military and the Central Intelligence Agency. It sells its cloud service to Immigration and Customs

Enforcement (ICE), which conducts raids and detains immigrants.

Amazon also sells facial recognition software to police departments across the US and to the Department of Homeland Security.

It's moving into the cop business in Britain too. Lancashire cops will store crime reports on Amazon's servers. And they hope to use Amazon to hold crime records for the cops' day to day use.

There are pigs in space too. The current trend is for billionaires to delve into space exploration. Partially this is vanity, but it is also about looking to grow their businesses.

Importantly the new boom in privatised space projects is just like privatisation on the ground—it gets a slice of the state's cash and business.

Back on the ground in the US, Amazon is set to begin accepting grocery orders from US customers using the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Snap). These used to be called food stamps.

This is a double subsidy for the company. In Arizona one in three of the company's own employees depends on Snap to put food on the table. In Pennsylvania and Ohio, the figure is one in ten.

So in Pennsylvania, for instance, an estimated £19 million in state subsidies supports 13 warehouses employing around 10,000 workers. At the same time, more than 1,000 of those workers don't make enough

Chicago offered Amazon a £1.8 billion “incentive package,” while Stonecrest, Georgia's city council, voted to change its name to “Amazon” and appoint Bezos as “mayor for life”.

WHEN Amazon opened a fulfilment centre in Miami-Dade County last year, county officials promised the warehouse would bring 2,300 jobs at an average salary of £28,000.

The company secured £1 million in tax rebates and a £4 million bond for infrastructure improvement.

But by the time negotiations concluded, the number of jobs necessary to qualify for the bond had been cut to 1,000, and the salary promise fell to £18,000.

In Britain the pattern is repeated. Amazon's tax bill on 11 of its gigantic “fulfilment centres” rose by less than £80,000 in total last year.

That is barely half the tax bill of an average department store.

A Treasury Committee heard earlier this month that HMRC had been “instructed not to go too hard on Amazon”. One MP said this was a “secret policy”.

Maybe that explains why last year the company's corporation tax bill was just £7.4 million, despite UK sales reaching £7.3 billion. And after a series of deductions, it actually

received a £1.3 million credit to deduct from future payments to HMRC.

In other words, the British state ended up owing Amazon money!

Though happily you can now use the Amazon Ask Alexa service to renew your tax credits for you in a joint scheme with the HMRC.

All Bezos' cash comes from the exploitation of workers. Workers at warehouses in Britain have told of sleeping in tents and under bridges just to get to work on time.

Timed toilet breaks, impossible targets and exhausting, “intolerable” working conditions are frequent complaints.

Before workers can go home at the end of their shift, or go for their 30-minute break, they must walk through a set of security scanners.

Next to the scanners is a life-sized

Trade unionists in the Spanish state on a drive to recruit more Amazon workers into the union (left) Bezos is currently spending £30 million building a clock inside a hollowed-out mountain that he owns in Texas (below, left)

cardboard image of a cheery worker. “This is the best job I have ever had!” pronounces a speech bubble.

Workers are divided into groups. There are the people on the “receive lines” and the “pack lines”.

Some unpack, check and scan every product arriving. And some pack up customers' orders at the other end of the process.

Another group stows away suppliers' products somewhere in the warehouse. They put things wherever there's a free space.

Workers use handheld computers to scan both the item they are stowing away and a barcode on the spot on the shelf where they put it.

So only Amazon's computers know where everything is.

The “pickers” push trolleys around and pick out customers' orders from the aisles. Amazon's software calculates the most efficient walking route to collect all the items to fill a trolley.

Pickers holding computerised handsets are perpetually timed and measured as they fast-walk up to 15 miles per shift. Managers can text the hand held screens to tell a worker to hurry up or to issue a warning.

Every warehouse has its own “continuous improvement manager”. As Marc Onetto, the senior vice president of worldwide operations, put it, “They are not consultants, they are insultants. They are really not nice.”

Some people also patrol the warehouses pushing tall little desks on wheels with laptops on them. They are “mobile problem solvers” looking for any hitches that could be slowing down the operation.

Employees wear blue ID badges. Agency workers wear green ones. There is a strict “three strikes and release” discipline system—“release” being a euphemism for getting sacked.

But there are other strikes too.

The news of the scale of Bezos' wealth came on the same day as Amazon Prime Day. Prime Day, one of a number of 36-hour events to extract more money out of people, also coincided with a global strike by Amazon workers over poor working conditions.

Amazon workers in Spain, Germany and Poland all struck despite being threatened with the sack. In Spain riot police attacked workers who shut down Madrid's fulfilment centre.

WORKERS AT Amazon warehouses are tracked by handheld devices and walk up to 15 miles per shift (above)

money to buy food. But graciously Amazon will now accept the vouchers so they can buy its goods.

Amazon is bringing back the “company town” of the late 19th century. The company demands tribute from governments worldwide, requiring billions in tax breaks and free handouts in exchange for building its warehouses.

It forced over 200 US cities into a bidding war to lure the company's second headquarters with massive handouts.



Amazon's UK corporation tax last year was just £7.4 million on sales of £7.3 billion

WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7840 5602 for more information

{ SOCIALIST WORKER } PUBLIC MEETINGS

NORWICH

How do we stop the rise of racism and the far right?

Thu 2 Aug, 7.30pm,
Vauxhall Centre,
Johnson Place, NR2 2SA

{ SOCIALIST WORKER } BRANCH MEETINGS

Weekly meetings to discuss political issues and our local interventions. All welcome.

BARNSELEY

The fight to defend abortion rights

Thu 2 Aug, 7pm,
YMCA, Blucher St,
S70 1AP

BOLTON

Immigration—the myths spread to divide us

Wed 1 Aug, 7pm,
Bolton Socialist Club,
16 Wood St (off
Bradshawgate), BL1 1DY

BRISTOL

Why Israel is a racist state

Wed 1 Aug, 7.30pm,
YHA, 14 Narrow Quay,
BS1 4QA

DERBY

Trump, racism and the far right—how do we turn the tide?

Thu 2 Aug, 7pm,
West End Community Centre,
Mackworth Rd (next to
Britannia Mill), DE22 3BL

DUNDEE

Marx@200—the revolutionary ideas of Karl Marx

Wed 1 Aug, 7.30pm,
Dundee Voluntary Action,
10 Constitution Rd, DD1 1LL

GLASGOW

The 1930s in slow motion—what's ahead?

Thu 2 Aug, 7pm,
Avant Garde, 33-44 King St,
Merchant City, G1 5QT

HUDDERSFIELD

Trump, racism and the far right—how do we turn the tide?

Wed 1 Aug, 6.30pm,
Brian Jackson House,
2 New North Parade (near
both train and bus stations),
HD1 5JP

LEEDS: CITY CENTRE

What do socialists say about freedom of speech?

Thu 2 Aug, 7pm,
The Swarthmore Education
Centre, 2-7 Woodhouse Square,
LS3 1AD

LONDON: HACKNEY

Palestine, antisemitism and defending Corbyn

Thu 2 Aug, 7.30pm,
The Round Chapel,
2 Powerscroft Rd (corner
Lower Clapton Rd),
E5 0PU

SOCIALIST WORKER BRANCH MEETINGS

The Brexit crisis... How do we get rid of the Tories?

BIRMINGHAM

Wed 1 Aug, 7pm,
Birmingham LGBT Centre,
38/40 Holloway Circus,
B1 1EQ

EXETER

Thu 2 Aug, 7pm,
The Exeter peace shop,
31 New Bridge St,
EX4 3AH

LONDON: ISLINGTON

Wed 1 Aug, 7pm,
The Old Fire Station,
84 Mayton St,
N7 6QT

ROTHERHAM

Wed 29 Aug, 7pm,
Talbot Lane Methodist Church Centre,
Moorgate St,
S60 2EY

LONDON: LEWISHAM

Victory in Ireland—where next in the fight for abortion rights?

Wed 1 Aug, 7.30pm,
Deptford Lounge,
9 Giffin St, SE8 4RH

LONDON: NEWHAM

Why does capitalism love plastic?

Wed 1 Aug, 7.00pm,
Stratford Advice Arcade
107-109 The Grove (next to
Morrisons car park), E15 1HP

LONDON: TOWER HAMLETS

Decolonising education—what is the legacy of empire?

Wed 1 Aug, 7pm,
Epainos Church,
Lichfield Road,
E3 5AT

LONDON: WALTHAM FOREST

How can we fight for LGBT+ liberation?

Wed 1 Aug, 7.30pm,
William Morris Community
Centre, 6-8 Greenleaf Rd,
Walthamstow, E17 6QQ

OXFORD

Trump, trade wars and imperialism

Wed 1 Aug, 7.30pm,
Restore Building,
Manzil Way, OX4 1YH

PORTSMOUTH

Angela Davis—women, race and class

Wed 1 Aug, 7.30pm,
Somerstown
Community Centre,
River's St,
PO5 4EZ

SCARBOROUGH

Is there such a thing as a just war?

Wed 1 Aug, 7.30pm,
Tap and Spile,
94 Falsgrave Rd,
YO12 5AZ

SHEFFIELD: CITY CENTRE

The fight for trans liberation

Thu 2 Aug, 7pm,
Central United Reformed
Church, 60 Norfolk St
(near Crucible Theatre),
S1 2JB

SOUTHAMPTON

What's happening in South Asia?

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A stylish tribute to Glasgow's Mackintosh

A new exhibition displays Charles Rennie Mackintosh's work. **Dave Sherry** looks at the life of the artist who defined Glasgow's unique look

IT'S 150 years since the birth of Glasgow's renowned architect, designer and artist Charles Rennie Mackintosh. The city's museums have marked the occasion with a stunning exhibition.

Based on new research this exhibition includes many items not seen for a generation or more.

The displays of furniture, ceramics, stained glass, metalwork, embroidery, graphics books and interiors let visitors revel in the creativity of Mackintosh and the artists he worked with.

His work was influential at a time when Glasgow became a key centre of the Art Nouveau movement.

As a decorator and designer Mackintosh was acclaimed at major exhibitions in Turin and Vienna in 1900.

His architectural influence became strong in Austria and Germany.

In 1902 German Modernist Architect Hermann Muthesius wrote after his visit to the UK,

"Those who want to see art should bypass London and go straight to Glasgow," he wrote.

"Glasgow's take on art is unique. In architecture it is a new, young city."

Favourite

Glasgow has many fine Mackintosh buildings and his enduring masterpiece—the Glasgow School of Art—was voted "Britain's favourite building of the last 175 years".

Sadly it was ravaged by fire four years ago and its great library was destroyed.

This June, a year before its restoration was due to be completed, the Mackintosh was again gutted by fire.

Mackintosh was ignored in his own land until almost 50 years after his death, despite being far ahead of his time with many of his designs. Mackintosh was a creative

genius, influenced by Japanese art and up for the challenge of combining art and craft with the machine age.

By the end of the 19th century Glasgow had become an industrial powerhouse.

It produced the most innovative ships, locomotives and textiles in the world. Much of this stemmed from the coupling of science and art.

This process fed into Mackintosh's art. He developed his ideas from this spirit of innovation and collaborative creativity.

His talents were nurtured at the Glasgow School of Art, where as a trainee draughtsman and architect he attended night classes after work.

Emergence

His productive collaboration with other artists and craft makers inspired his architectural imagination and saw the emergence of the Glasgow Style in the late 1890s.

It was the birthplace of the only Art Nouveau movement in Britain and its distinctive approach to design and craft won international acclaim.

Mackintosh was a key figure in this.

He turned his back on commercial architecture when he became disenchanted with the business side of his profession.

In 1914 he and his wife Margaret moved to Suffolk where, because of his internationalist outlook, he was accused of being a German spy and was briefly imprisoned.

This retrospective is a fitting tribute to an artist who, a century and a half after his birth, still manages to inspire a fresh audience.

Charles Rennie Mackintosh—making the Glasgow Style
Until 14 August at the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum,
Argyle Street,
Glasgow G3 8AG
Go to bit.ly/RennieMac

THE MACKINTOSH building at the Glasgow School of Art

Richter's techniques show seamless transition between artistic mediums

IF YOU are in Southampton before 18 August, make your way to the John Hansard Gallery to see this free Gerhard Richter exhibition.

The first room contains four large tapestries—Abdu, Yusuf, Iblan and Musa—created in 2009. The designs are based on his famous Abstract Painting, created in 1990.

He photographed the painting and then divided it into four and each tapestry consists of a quarter of the design, reproduced and mirrored four times to give a kaleidoscopic effect. You get a sense of new ideas and patterns with each look.

Reproducing

If you can tear yourself away from them, the next room contains more rich ideas. Richter moves seamlessly from one medium to another—photographing paintings, then projecting and reproducing these.

Another work consists of layers of paint scraped across the canvas that sets your imagination to work. These pieces were produced



Abstraktes Bild (809-2)

14. März 2015

in stages so that he could study them before moving to the next stage—a time-consuming process.

Somewhat distracting from the exhibition are his comments about German immigration policy.

In a 2016 interview Richter said "We do not welcome refugees.

"I have nothing against foreigners, but it's not true that we have to welcome everybody. I won't invite them to dinner".

Richter's works are among the most sought-after for rich art collectors. In 2016 one of his paintings sold for almost £18 million.

He developed as an artist in the 1950s. After working as a sign painter's assistant, then as an assistant set painter in the municipal theatre in Zittan and was finally accepted by the Dresden Art School in 1951.

In 1959 he saw the work of Jackson Pollack and Lucio Fontana which had a huge impact

on him—he said it was the real reason he left East Germany.

He produced his first photo paintings—for which he is best known—in 1962.

He photographed people, places and objects, enlarging them, painting over them and adding colour to parts or transforming them to an abstract.

Bobby Noyes

Until 18 August
At the Hansard Gallery
142-144 Above Bar St,
Southampton SO14 7DU

RECENT protests in Iraq are an eloquent response by the mass of Iraqis to the outcome of the US invasion in 2003.

Thousands of people have taken to the streets in Iraqi cities and stormed government offices, demanding funding for basic services such as electricity and water.

Electricity shortages are a major problem that make everyday life almost unbearable for Iraqis—especially at the height of summer.

Southern Iraq is one of the hottest places on the planet.

At this time of year the temperature in Basra is over 50 degrees centigrade.

But there are only limited supplies of electricity and constant power cuts, so people can't run air conditioning or even fridges.

People are at breaking point.

But they also know this crisis can be traced right back to the invasion—and their demands are very political.

Some 15 years after the invasion, Iraqis are still paying a very heavy price.

The occupation completely laid waste to the Iraqi economy and also installed a corrupt and sectarian political system.

Of course, there was corruption under Saddam Hussein but it was much more intense after the invasion.

The new system produced a huge surge in corrupt practices. That benefited US corporations.

It also served certain Iraqi business people and politicians that the US struck deals with.

The US embedded a sectarian political system that Iraq had never seen before.

After 2004 every single election was based on sectarian parties because that's the system the Americans designed for Iraq after they destroyed the state of Hussein.

The US favoured certain ethnic and sectarian groups—in particular the Shia elite.

Encouraged

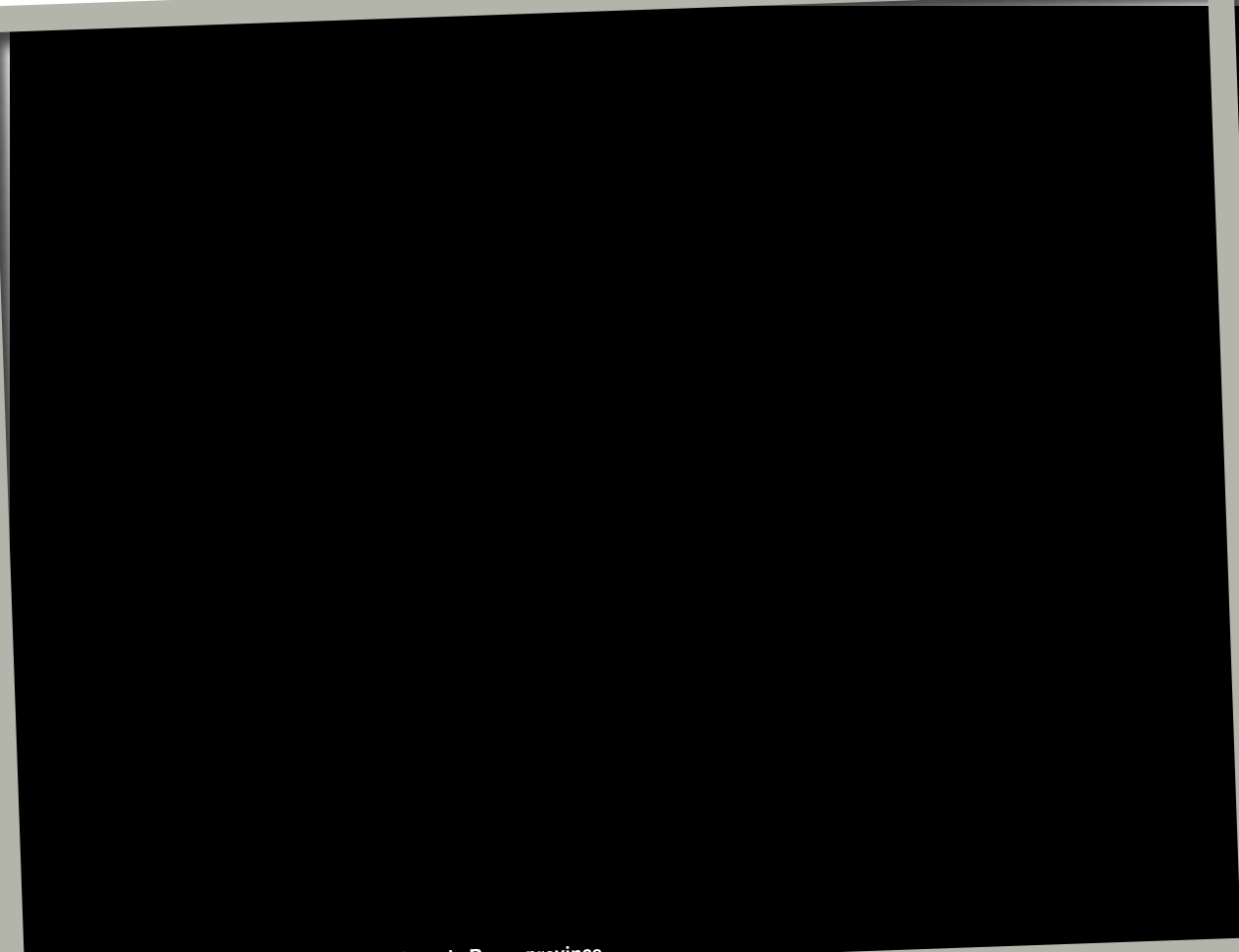
But in fact all the political parties and networks that the US encouraged to grow—Sunni, Shia, Kurds, whatever—have all benefited from the corrupt system.

So they have a common interest in maintaining this and denying the mass of Iraqis access to the country's resources.

What's significant about the current protests—which are on a big scale—is that the two things they're targeting are corruption and sectarian political practices.

In particular in the city of Basra people are carrying placards and chanting slogans that point out that Basra produces vast amounts of oil revenue.

But they don't see any of it in terms of wages and access to key things such as power and fuel.



A PROTEST in front of the governor's buildings in Basra province

THE FIGHT FOR IRAQ'S FUTURE

Iraqi people are still suffering as a result of the West's invasion and the corrupt system it installed. But Phil Marfleet explains that resistance is on the streets



An Iraqi oil field

There's fury. Some 95 per cent of the Iraqi state's revenue comes from oil.

People see the government drawing on this massive oil revenue—which is what keeps the government going and sustains the system of sectarian privilege.

Yet in the areas where the oil fields are located people are struggling to survive.

Ordinary Iraqis are responding very clearly to this. They're against corruption. They want



Collective struggle and protest is now an option for young Iraqis

to see the country's resources distributed in a way that meets people's needs. And they want to get rid of the sectarian system.

They're saying, where's the money? It's in the hands of crooked politicians. The whole system's rotten.

Protests over these issues have in fact been going on since 2011—the year of the Arab Spring. They've become more widespread every year. In 2015 and 2016 demonstrators

occupied the Green Zone in the centre of capital city Baghdad, protesting about the same things they're protesting about today.

This is a fortified core to the city set up by the US after the invasion.

This was where the occupation was administered from, protected by blast barriers and armoured vehicles. It later became the centre of Iraqi government.

These protests were very shocking to the regime. The story put about by the US after its troops were pulled out was that the Iraqi crisis is over—that they'd installed a new democratic system and prosperity was coming.

But in 2015-16 a very hard government was challenged by a mass of demonstrators. The slogans were no to corruption, and for a civil state.

The demonstrations were repressed, partly on the basis of the government saying Iraqis have to unify against Isis.

This was the period when Isis was taking over parts of western and northern Iraq and had taken over the city of Mosul.

THE LINE of the government was that the protests are in defiance of the call for Iraqi national solidarity against Isis.

Isis is gone now and the Iraqi government trumpets its success. But now it can't use the excuse of Isis any more.

With the calls for unity now defunct, Iraqis feel more confident about going back to the basic issues.

They've run out of patience and the demonstrations are back on a much bigger scale.

These demonstrations involve all sorts of people. But they're basically working class mobilisations—and a really significant number of people involved are young people.

A couple of years ago a reliable research group, the International Crisis Group (ICG), produced a very well researched report on what they called "generation 2000".

By that they meant Iraqis who had grown up in their teenage years after the invasion and were faced with the consequences of the occupation.

With an economic crisis on one hand and a sectarian political system which was breeding ethnic cleansing by rival militias, where do young people stand?

They were faced with just two options, as the ICG put it—fight or flight.

It was very difficult to get a decent job, or sometimes even any job.

Young men were constantly induced to join sectarian militias according to where they lived or on the basis of ethno-linguistic identity.

The other option was to leave, and since the invasion

there has been a constant stream of people leaving Iraq. Up until the Syrian counter-revolution and civil war, Iraq provided the largest number of refugees of any country in the world.

Young people in particular left the country. They would go to the big cities in the Arab world initially—Beirut, Damascus, Cairo or maybe to Turkey.

Migration

Then they would make their way through international migration networks, and lots arrived in Europe.

There was virtually no future for them. But what's happened now is that, instead of fight militarily or flight, there's another option of collective struggle and collective protest.

That's why lots of the demonstrators are young people. And they are associated politically with two organisations.

One is the political network associated with the cleric Moqtada Al-Sadr. He comes from a famous Shia family and led a militia which at various points fought the US after the invasion.

But some years ago he transformed himself into a type of populist.

He is trying to position himself in this movement which is so angry about corruption and sectarianism by becoming a radical-sounding leader.

So he supported the demonstrations of 2015-2016, and he also opposed Shia leaders who are linked to Iran.

The other political element is the Communist Party.

The Iraqi Communist Party has revitalised itself in recent years and is attracting quite a lot of support from young people.

In parliamentary elections in May, Sadr's organisation and the Communist Party joined together in a "Sairoon Alliance."

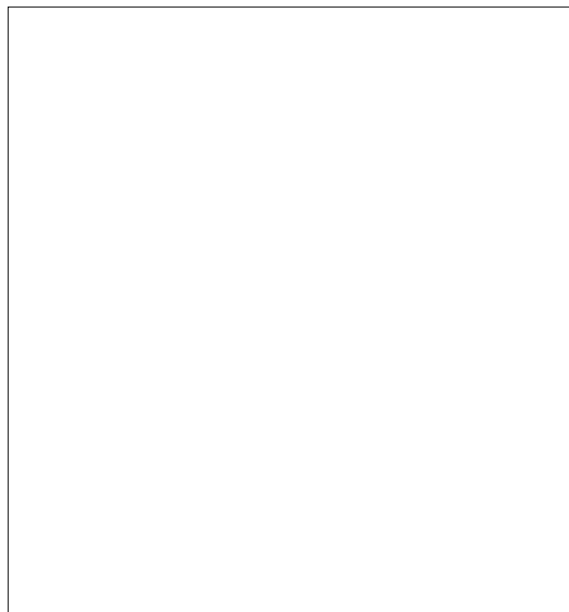
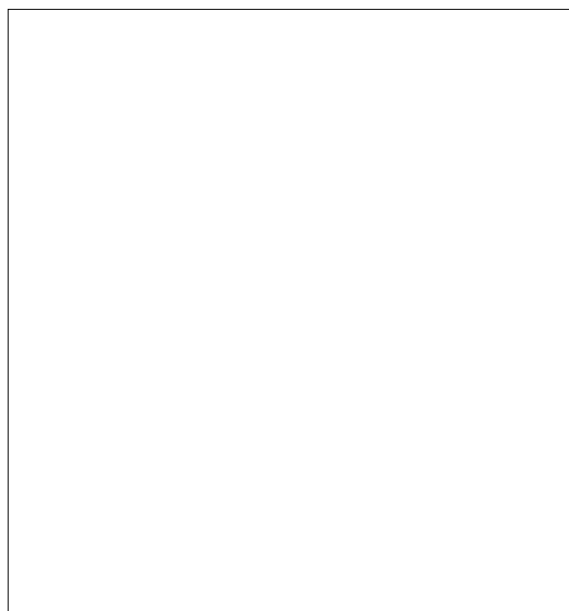
The election had quite a low turnout which reflected a general scepticism about the whole political system.

But it nonetheless produced success for the radical protest alliance.

It won the largest number of seats—to the horror of both the US and Iran which each had their own preferred political parties.

The sort of people who voted for the Sairoon Alliance are key activists in the streets today.

Many of these demonstrations are in a sense



PARTS OF Iraq lie in ruins as a result of the 2003 invasion and fighting Isis (top). **Protesters block the road to the entrance of Basra in July** (above) **Moqtada Al-Sadr** (below)

spontaneous—triggered by the electricity crisis which has pushed people over the edge at the height of summer.

But over the last few years networks of activists have also come into existence. These will be critical in stimulating and spreading the protests.



READ MORE

● **Nemesis in Iraq** by Alex Callinicos bit.ly/NemesisIraq

● **Isis and counter-revolution** by Anne Alexander bit.ly/145Isis

● **Protests in Iraq demand funding for key services** by Nick Clark bit.ly/2507Iraq

● **Egypt: Contested Revolution** by Phil Marfleet £17.99

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Putin Trump in his place—but he just won't stay there

The US president is trying the patience of much of the state and the ruling class, writes **Alistair Farrow**

DONALD TRUMP spent last week testing the limits of presidential power—and the contradictions that keep him in place.

He zig-zagged between palling up with Russian president Vladimir Putin and professing his "toughness" against Russia.

During his European tour he attacked Theresa May, German chancellor Angela Merkel and bolstered far right wing forces across Europe.

Then he decided to turn on the US security services.

Trump declared that he believed Putin's claim there was no Russian involvement in the 2016 presidential election.

This drew him into conflict with the US security establishment, which claims the opposite.

Within 24 hours, presumably under pressure from advisers, Trump had reversed this. He claimed he had misspoken.

By Wednesday Trump was claiming, "There's been no president ever as tough as I have been on Russia."

Now he has invited Putin to Washington.

By calling into question the credibility of the US security services Trump overplayed his hand.

Allegations of treason began to fly around.

Treason

Washington Post columnist Peter Baker wrote that "Trump was being accused not only of poor judgment but of treason—and not just by fringe elements and liberal talk show hosts, but by a former CIA director."

Watching the US "intelligence community"—veterans of countless "regime changes" across the world—bemoan alleged foreign intervention in an election feels like entering the twilight zone.

The bosses' Financial Times newspaper said the episode

"ranks as a betrayal of the American national interest".

Calling into question the competency of key institutions of the state is too far for sections of the ruling class—even for those numbed to Trump's gyrations.

When he was elected he surrounded himself with generals and placated organisations such as the CIA.

Yet now Trump has placed himself on a war footing with many of the military and foreign policy establishment.

He has purged all but two generals from his staff and repeatedly attacked the intelligence services.

Trump's strategy of destabilising European liberal politics has converged with Putin's for the time being.

That has enraged the Democrats and the US foreign policy hawks who want a more combative stance against Russia in Syria.

Competing visions for the way forward for the US ruling class lie behind the bitter row.

Trump's isolationism is a minority position, but he has also been tolerated because he has delivered for

bosses' profits, passing on huge tax cuts for the rich.

Trump is caught between appeasing his detractors and appealing to his base. He won his support partly by promising to "drain the swamp" of the same people who are accusing him of treason.

He has tested the limits of that contradiction.

In a recent speech US national intelligence director Dan Coats said, "Putin's shadow war is aimed at undermining Americans' trust in our institutions."

Hacked

It may well be the case that Russian intelligence hacked the emails of Hillary Clinton's campaign manager John Podesta and released them to Wikileaks.

But it's worth remembering what the Podesta emails revealed about US society.

They lifted the lid on a network of patronage and privilege that was stomach-turning.

People emailed Podesta to get jobs, to arrange fundraising parties and to intervene to stop Democratic candidates attacking donors who supported the party.

Donors were encouraged to fund ex-president Bill Clinton's lavish lifestyle.

Revelations like this made Hillary Clinton's campaign slogan, "America is already great," a joke.

Claims by the Democrats to be leading the resistance to Trump are equally laughable.



Trump is on a war footing with many in the foreign policy establishment

Khan's housing plan soft on developers

by ALISTAIR FARROW

LONDON MAYOR Sadiq Khan's long-awaited best practice guide for London housing estate redevelopment has been released.

The document reaffirms Labour's commitment to ballot residents on redevelopment proposals.

That's an improvement on the draft guidance that described ballots as an over-simplified "yes or no" vote on "complex" decisions.

The problem with the new guide is over who initiates the ballot process.

That is the responsibility of "Investment Partners (IPs)", or developers, who are required to "determine whether the Resident Ballot Requirement (RBR) applies to each project.

"IPs may apply for an exemption to the RBR" in three circumstances. Firstly, if the demolition is needed to accommodate a "major infrastructure project".

Secondly, to "address concerns about the safety of residents". And thirdly, to "reconfigure provision of supported



PROTESTING AGAINST the Haringey Development Vehicle in February PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

and/or specialist housing".

All of this leaves the developers a huge amount of scope to knock down homes without tenants having a vote.

On top of this, "Strategic Estate Regeneration Projects" already underway and which require demolition can apply for exemption from ballots.

Far from signalling the end of council housing demolition, more bitter fights are likely to come.

One long-running fight has ended in victory for those who battled the developers.

On Tuesday of last week the hated Haringey Development Vehicle was killed off

as councillors in the north London borough voted to scrap the deal.

It follows a longrunning campaign against it by ordinary people in the area.

Before councillors took the vote, the cabinet heard from chief executive of developer Lendlease Europe, Dan

Labbad. "Personally I would find it absolutely heart-breaking to think we might throw away the opportunity to transform thousands of lives," said Labbad.

"This is literally a once-in-a-generation opportunity to deliver on this vision.

"We don't need to work in Haringey, but we very much want to.

Capacity

"There is a great fit between our capacity and your needs."

Shouts of "we don't want you" rang out from the public gallery.

Lendlease has raised the possibility of taking legal action against both the council and individual councillors.

"We have concerns at the threat of protracted legal action by Lendlease," said council leader Joseph Ejiofor.

"However the people of Haringey elected us to govern the borough, and to take decisions that are in the interest of the Haringey residents."

The council will face costs of over £500,000 to exit the deal, on top of £2.5 million already spent on costs,

mainly lawyers' fees.

That money could, and should, have been spent on council housing.

Now services must not be cut further to find the money demanded by Lendlease.

At the same meeting the council voted to form a wholly-owned development company to build and manage council housing.

Cabinet member for housing Emine Ibrahim said, "The council owns a number of sites in the borough on which new housing development is possible.

"We are committed to maximising the number of council-rented homes that will be delivered on these sites."

Ejiofor added, "The preference of this administration, as stated in our manifesto, is to build council homes on our own land.

"We firmly believe that what is currently public land should remain in public ownership."

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Heatwave shines a light on a system that could kill us all

Extreme weather events become increasingly likely as the planet warms. Sarah Bates argues fundamental change is needed to prevent climate change becoming catastrophic for life on earth

BRITAIN HAS been sweltering in an unusually long and a particularly hot spell of sunny weather.

Newspapers are speculating whether this will be the hottest summer since 1976.

The heat and drought have caused real problems. But privatised water companies in England would rather implement hosepipe bans during dry periods than fix faulty systems which mean billions of litres are lost through leaks.

So while water is wasted because fat cats want to trouser profits, some communities face severe droughts.

About 4 percent of Scotland's population is at risk of running dry. They are "off mains" and rely on springs and wells for their water supply.

Agricultural

Sandy Tulloch, a farmer in Aberdeenshire gets his water from a spring, which he thinks will run dry in a week. He said "The water is in dire straits really, we need to get rain pretty quickly and we need to get some heavy rain."

And farmers are warning of an agricultural crisis in some parts of Britain, because of "scorched" land.

Extreme weather also has a wider impact on the natural world.

Barn owls are suffering because they struggled to nest and breed during the extreme weather this spring.

Now the hot weather is making it harder for them to find food and water. And for humans, soaring temperatures can cause health problems and even death.

It's thought over 2,000 people died in 2003 because of a heatwave that swept across Europe.



EXTREME WEATHER makes events such as the recent wildfires in east London more likely

PICTURE: ANA BLAKE

After this the NHS developed guidance for preventing exhaustion, heatstroke and dehydration. It advises to stay inside during the hottest parts of the day, and keep cool.

This is good advice for some—but most people have to work or travel during the day.

Air conditioning costs thousands to install and only 0.5 percent of homes have it. Protection from heat-related injury should be treated as a matter of public health policy, not left to whether an individual can afford air conditioning.

Infrastructure

Homes should be built, or retroactively fitted, with appropriate cooling and heating systems. And other infrastructure should be built—like "Cooling centres" that operate in countries such as Canada.

These allow people, including the homeless, to go there during the day to stay cool and healthy.

The heatwave also causes travel chaos because rail tracks bend, meaning cancelled or delayed services.

And roads are closed because of asphalt "behaving like molasses" and melting. A tougher kind of asphalt is produced—but only 5 percent of roads are coated in it, because it costs

more.

Technological solutions to climate change are only a delaying tactic, though—more fundamental change is needed.

Only a society organised for the needs of the majority of people, not capitalism, will provide the basis for a sustainable world that is now so desperately needed.

Why leaks aren't fixed

UNITED Utilities, which provides water for north west England, is the first company in England to implement a hosepipe ban in 2018. The firm said the ban was necessary to maintain "essential supplies".

But United Utilities loses 439 million litres of water every day through unfixed leaks.

In fact, 20 percent of Britain's water is lost in this way.

Water industry expert David Hall said companies just aren't interested in fixing the leaks. "They can't recoup the cost of making reductions in leakage levels except by reducing profits, that's not what they want to do," he said.

Blowing hot ...and cold

THIS heatwave follows the "Beast from the East" cold snap which combined freezing temperatures with heavy snowfall in February and March this year.

As many as 16 weather-related deaths were recorded.

Motorists were stranded overnight and passengers had to sleep overnight on broken-down trains.

Not all transport suffered the same fate. Heathrow Airport had invested £37 million in snow-clearing and de-icing equipment.

It is possible to weatherproof services—but bosses will only do it when it's in the interests of profit.

Competition means capitalism can't solve climate crisis

ALTHOUGH IT may appear obvious that the heatwave is directly caused by global warming, a direct line between the two events doesn't exist.

Climate change makes extreme weather patterns more likely, but there are other factors to consider as well.

Edward Hanna, a professor of climate science and meteorology at the University of Lincoln said, "You can't just link individual events to climate change."

"There's a lot of natural variability [in the weather]

and we're talking about seasonal changes which are always variable to some degree".

But it is true we are likely to see longer, hotter summers as a result of a hotter earth, where temperatures have risen by 1 degree centigrade since 1850.

Catastrophic

It might not seem like much, but any future increase in temperature will be catastrophic on a global scale.

Sea levels will rise, more animal species will be

threatened with extinction and extreme weather such as hurricanes and tsunamis will become more commonplace.

In 2015 world leaders agreed a target to limit temperature rises to a maximum of 1.5 degrees—a figure that's set to be broken by 2020.

Much more drastic action is needed to tackle climate change properly.

But scientists are still working out exactly why Britain is experiencing such unusual weather.

Climatologist Ted

Shepherd said 2018's heatwave was "a sign of things to come", and warned that "we can expect more and more warm temperatures".

One solution to limit the impact of global warming is straightforward—stop burning fossil fuels and start using renewable, clean energy sources.

But capitalism is addicted to competition, which means individual CEOs or government leaders don't want to lose ground to their competitors.

Shepherd warned,

"Because of climate change we will get more hot summers in general, and this is a good example of what's going to come so it's an opportunity to think of our resilience and if we're ready for such a thing."

This heatwave shows how much more will need to be done to meet the challenge of climate change.

IN BRIEF

Cleaners set for Living Wage strikes

WORKERS AT the Ministry of Justice and Kensington and Chelsea council have voted for strikes.

The United Voices of the World union members are set to strike for the London Living Wage of £10.20 an hour.

They are currently paid £7.83 an hour and employed by outsourcing firms.

Cleaners at the Ministry of Justice do not get the same holiday and sick pay entitlements as workers employed directly.

The strike dates are 7 August to 9 August.

●To donate to the workers' strike fund go to uvwunion.org.uk/current-campaigns

A postal ballot for London bus garages

BUS WORKERS at nine garages in London are preparing for a ballot on whether to strike over pay.

Unite union members at Arriva North garages returned an overwhelming vote to take action in a consultative vote.

Some 1,161 workers backed a strike, while only 31 voted against action.

Anger at academy job cuts in Walsall

THE GMB union has slammed an academy chain's plan to make 13 school support staff redundant.

The move will affect children at Bloxwich Academy in Walsall.

The GMB suggested that chief executive Dame Maureen Brennan could take a pay cut instead of slashing workers' jobs.

She gets £150,000 a year.

Tolpuddle Festival draws thousands

THOUSANDS OF people gathered for the annual Tolpuddle Martyrs' Festival in Dorset last weekend.

TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady stressed the need for unity among workers.

"Black and white, women and men, migrant and indigenous—we are all working people and we will always be stronger together," she said.

Mass struggle can shift Welsh Labour

MARK Drakeford, Labour leadership candidate in Wales and a Corbyn supporter, addressed a meeting of Swansea Momentum last week.

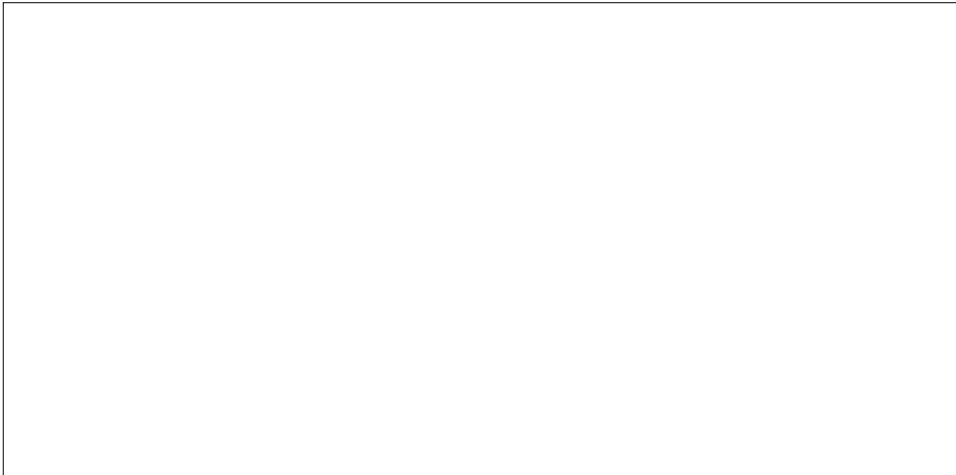
He represents a welcome change from current first minister Carwyn Jones.

But a candidate can win the popular vote but still lose because of the impact of the electoral college.

A mass movement from below is needed to drive through a radical alternative.

Rhoda Thomas and Tim Evans

PRIDE PARADES



AROUND 5,000 people attended a Trans Pride parade in Brighton last Saturday. Organisers said it was the biggest turnout yet for the parade, only the fifth in its history. Thousands of people attended Hull Pride on the same day

OIL WORKERS

North Sea oil rig strike hits production hard

WORKERS STRUCK for 24 hours on North Sea rigs operated by oil giant Total on Monday.

The action is over a wage review that could force workers to increase offshore working time from two weeks on, three weeks off to three on, three off.

The Unite union said action by 44 of its members had halted production on the Alwyn, Dunbar and Elgin platforms.

John Boland, Unite regional officer, said, "This is about having more time at home with families and loved ones."

One-day walkouts are set to take place on 6 and 20 August, and 12-hour stoppages were planned for 30 July and 13 August.

Unite said a continuous ban on overtime had also begun.

The Energy Voice website



Aker Solutions workers met and have voted to strike

reported that "anger over the firm's plans to hold a barbecue in the midst of redundancies" had led to increasing "tensions".

■GMB and Unite union members working for Aker Solutions on board the Statoil Mariner Oil Platform have voted overwhelmingly for industrial action.

They are in dispute over

pay and conditions. GMB members voted by nearly 78 percent for action, and Unite members by 83 percent. The GMB turnout was 79 percent.

Initial plans for staggered increasing strikes have been substituted for a full strike at the earliest possible date after a seconded proposal from the floor. **Rig worker**

HEALTH WORKERS

Paramedics stage walkout saying, 'Enough is enough'

AMBULANCE STAFF across the north west of England struck for 12 hours last Saturday.

Around 160 workers took part in a walkout in Lancashire, Cumbria, Cheshire, Merseyside and Greater Manchester.

It was the fourth walkout by paramedics in recent weeks after a ballot saw more than 84 percent of those who responded vote for strikes.

They have been waiting for the outcome of job re-evaluations going back more than a decade.

Mike Buoe, GMB union organiser, said, "Our members are desperate to get this situation resolved."

"They've been waiting a long time for their job to be re-evaluated for the years



Ambulance staff are angry

between 2005 to 2016.

"We've had just one meeting since the strikes started—most of the time we are forced to speak via email."

"We've asked a number of times to meet with the chair of the Trust, and we get ignored."

"After almost 13 years, our members are now saying enough is enough."

CHESTERFIELD

NHS workers vow to beat back outsourcing bosses

NHS WORKERS in the Unison union are campaigning to stop their jobs being outsourced from Chesterfield Royal Hospital Foundation.

A key decision on their futures was set to be made at a board meeting this week.

The board at the hospital will meet to decide whether to transfer services such as estates and facilities to a wholly owned subsidiary company.

This could mean staff lose the benefits and protections of working for the NHS.

A similar move was recently dropped after a series of strikes at Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Foundation Trust.

Trusts claim that money will be saved by exploiting a tax loophole. But the major

savings will come from employing new staff on non-NHS terms and conditions with no access to the NHS Pension Scheme.

Unison's head of health Sara Gorton said, "This worrying trend is caused by the government's underfunding of the NHS."

Trusts are seeking to save money by creating wholly owned subsidiary companies but it is the workers and patients who lose out as a result.

"As we saw in Wigan, NHS staff will fight being outsourced, and they will win."

If the board goes ahead with the plans, workers will have to follow Wigan's example and strike.

CHAGOS ISLANDERS



PICTURE: CHAGOS ISLANDERS MOVEMENT

CHAGOSSIANS—people exiled from their homes on the island of Chagos in 1966—held a two-day protest in Trafalgar Square last weekend (see above).

They were raising awareness of their battle for justice and the right to return to the island in the Indian Ocean.

Harold Wilson's Labour government forcibly

removed Chagossians from the island to make room for a US military base.

Chagossians have lived in exile in Mauritius and Britain ever since—many of them in poverty.

The protest was organised by the Chagos Islanders Movement and supported by the Chagos Support Association.

Nick Clark

OBITUARY

Pat Morrin
1943-2018

PAT MORRIN was a legend. He had political vision and all the personal attributes necessary to be effective in changing the world—and he was a lovely guy to hang out with.

Combative and kind, serious and thoughtful but always up for the craic.

Pat, a long-time member of the Socialist Workers Party, played a big part in the history of struggles shaping his home town of Birmingham.

In the post-war boom Pat and fellow socialists were instrumental in building an effective network of

trade union activists across construction sites.

Their organisational strategy led to a boom in builders' wages.

Following the Birmingham pub bombings in 1974 Birmingham was awash with anti-Irish racism and there was no hiding with a name like Pat.

This set Pat up for a lifetime of anti-racist campaigning.

Always an activist, when Birmingham Council tried to privatise over 90,000 council homes Pat was in his element.

He was a leading member of a broad campaign that got thousands of tenants involved, giving them a sense of ownership of their destiny.

The Birmingham stock

transfer result was a decisive victory and took the wind out of the national council house privatisation campaign.

Pat was well-rooted and was one of the more successful Socialist Alliance candidates.

He stood in the 2002 local elections for public services, people not profit and of course council housing.

Pat remained an activist as long as his health allowed.

He loved talking politics on the streets and was out with us campaigning for his class against the Nazis, the bedroom tax, and on NHS picket lines.

We will miss you comrade. **Jenny Austin (Birmingham SWP) and Luke (Defend Council Housing)**

TRANSPORT WORKERS

Supertram workers say no to paltry deal

by SARAH BATES

WORKERS ON the Supertram in Sheffield struck for 72 hours from Thursday of last week. It was the latest action in their fight for decent pay.

Bosses offered the 200 drivers and conductors a shameful three-year pay deal which would have amounted to just 26p an hour more.

Unite union members had already struck against the shoddy deal on 9 and 12 July, following a 91 percent vote for strikes.

The action coincided with the three-day Tramlines music festival, and transport bosses hired buses from outside Sheffield to cope with the strike.

Unite's Steve Clark said, "If our members accepted the firm's derisory offer they would eventually, in the years ahead, be working for the national minimum wage."

"We will fight against this race to the bottom and continue to campaign for a proper wage rise for the hardworking drivers and conductors who are out in all weathers keeping the people of Sheffield on the move."

Meanwhile in Manchester 340 workers on the Metrolink



PICKETING AT the Supertram Nunnery depot

will start voting on whether to strike over pay.

Drivers, also members of Unite, are fighting a "sub-standard" pay offer and pay levels.

Steve Davis from Unite said workers are fighting for "a pay deal that addresses pay levels which sees them earn up to £7,000 less than tram drivers in other UK cities for doing the same job".

Unite and Metrolink bosses were due to sit down for talks this week.

EUROSTAR

EUROSTAR WORKERS were set to walk out for 24 hours this Saturday over working conditions.

RMT members at the St Pancras terminal in central London had returned a 93 percent vote for strikes.

The union says service problems means thousands of passengers are forced onto the crowded concourse during busy periods in summer.

RMT general secretary Mick Cash said, "The conditions at St Pancras have been simply appalling in recent weeks with dangerous levels of overcrowding on the concourse as services plunge into meltdown on the cusp of the busiest part of the year."

French Eurostar workers at the Gare du Nord in Paris took action over similar issues earlier this month.

AIRPORT WORKERS

ABERDEEN AIRPORT workers have won a 3 percent pay rise following the threat of a strike.

Some 170 Unite members voted for action. They were demanding parity with workers at Glasgow International Airport who were awarded 3 percent.

Bosses tried to get Aberdeen workers to accept a 2.8 percent rise, but workers rejected that offer.

Meanwhile baggage handlers, check-in and boarding staff at Luton airport have suspended a planned strike.

The Unite members will be considering a revised offer on pay and conditions from Menzies Aviation.

And at Manchester Airport, workers will be considering a new offer on rosters.

Their Unite union is recommending acceptance of the deal.

The security staff, who are also Unite members, were due to start a strike ballot on Friday of last week.

CIVIL SERVICE WORKERS

Tories' anti-union laws stop PCS strike over pay



>>>from back page tradition of activities such as members' meetings.

"We've come under sustained attack, probably worse than any other union. We don't get facility time anymore, we're not allowed members' meetings in the workplace any more," she explained.

"Office closures means people have been moved from pillar to post so there's a lot of new organisation that people haven't yet

established." But she added, "More importantly, we haven't had a national strike campaign since 2013—and workplace organisation has suffered as a result".

Rebuilding the union's organisation means looking for more opportunities for activity and chances to wage a fight.

Serwotka said the pay campaign wasn't over, and the NEC was meeting to discuss the next steps as Socialist Worker went to press.

The best response to the anti-union laws is to defy them and strike anyway.

But if there is no national action, the union's leadership and activists should look at how it can stage local or sectional action.

This can prove that after this ballot result it's still possible to fight and win.

NEU WORKERS

Union staff stage a walkout

GMB AND Unite union members working for the ATL section of the NEU union struck on Thursday of last week.

The ATL merged with the NUT union to form the NEU last year. The strike was sparked by the restructure that followed the merger.

Unite said this threatened "changes to contracts, downgrading of posts and cuts to pay and conditions".

The GMB said the restructure would see "job losses, increases in workload, changes to

contracts, downgrading of posts and cuts in pay".

Unite and GMB members voted by 88 percent for strikes.

Some will be uncomfortable with the strike because it involves highly paid officials. But the strike involved around 200 people, not all highly paid.

More strikes could follow in September. And staff who work for the NUT section of the NEU are also considering strikes. A majority have voted for strikes in a consultative ballot.

RAIL AND TUBE

Deal on 'driver only' trains

GREATER ANGLIA workers are celebrating after pushing back bosses' plans to make train travel unsafe and inaccessible.

RMT union members struck 12 times on the network in the past year against plans to implement driver only operated (DOO) trains. Workers have now vote nine to one to accept an offer which is said to guarantee the guard's role.

It's the latest development in a huge fight that saw six networks strike together against DOO.

Most train operators have now reached deals.

Only South Western Railway (SWR) and Southern, which is owned by Govia Thameslink Railway, have yet to reach a settlement.

Workers at SWR plan a series of strikes that would see them walk out for eight days in July and August.

The first strike was set for Thursday of this week, with further action scheduled for the August bank holiday weekend.

■WORKERS AT the Ruislip tube depot are preparing to walk out again in their battle for pay. RMT members at the west London site are in dispute about pay parity and train preparation payments.

They will walk out from 7pm on 3 August for 12 hours and from 7am on 5 August, again for 12 hours.

Ruislip depot workers are responsible for all the tube network's fleet of engineering trains.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Kirklees bins workers win their battle over bullying

BIN WORKERS in the Unison union at Kirklees council in West Yorkshire have won an important fight.

They met on Friday of last week to discuss the latest offer in a dispute that led to a week of well-supported strikes.

The workers—who had voted to start an indefinite strike on 31 July if the dispute had not been resolved—voted to suspend the action and to accept the council's latest offer.

The workers believe that their action has won them a major victory in their fight for reasonable rounds, and an end to bullying and racism.

The offer includes an increase in the workforce from 140 to 170, a review

of workloads to create equal rounds, two extra wagons and a commitment from management to deal with the allegations of bullying and racism.

Management will continue to keep three managers away from the day to day operations.

However, despite this being a victory, the workers' understandable suspicion of the council management led them to request fortnightly meetings with union reps to receive updates on how negotiations are progressing.

The workers are clear that if the offer is not implemented they will reinstate their action. Nick Ruff, Kirklees Unison branch chair (pc)

FOOD AND DRINK

Now squash the bosses

STRIKES ARE set to hit a Britvic factory in Norwich as workers begin walkouts over redundancy packages. Bosses plan to close the factory by 2019, putting 242 jobs at risk.

The industrial action will see strikes for three days for the next six weeks. It follows a 24-hour strike on 12 July.

The site is the home of Robinson's squash and Fruit Shoot.

The workforce is split into three groups, who will each strike for one day a week.

Technical operators will walk out every Wednesday, operators on Thursdays and drive site and engineering staff on Fridays.

Ivan Mercer, GMB regional organiser, said, "It is clear that Britvic have no concern for the well-being of their employees."

REJECT SHODDY TORY PAY DEALS

by SADIE ROBINSON

THE TORIES announced pay deals for a million public sector workers in England this week.

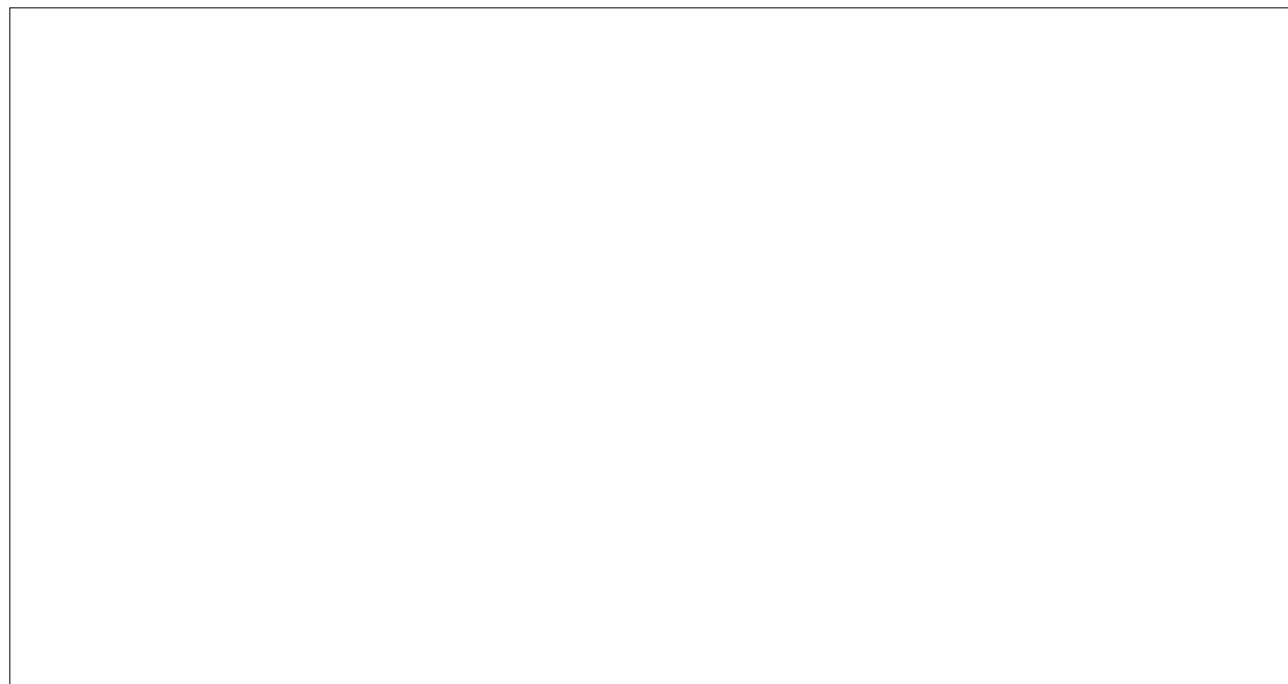
The Daily Telegraph newspaper declared, “Public sector workers ‘set for 3.5 percent wage hike’.”

In reality pay rises for most of the workers will be lower and below inflation. They will not make up for years of real terms pay cuts. And money for the increases will come from existing budgets—possibly meaning more cuts.

On top of that, the deals don’t cover millions of public sector workers, such as college staff or those in the civil service (see below).

Teachers were granted a 3.5 percent rise, but those on the “upper pay range” will get 2 percent and “leadership” will get 1.5 percent. Some may not even get these rises as “schools will determine how it is set”.

The deal is less than that recommended by the School Teachers’ Review Body, which said all teachers and school leaders should get



WORKERS HAVE suffered from years of below-inflation pay deals

3.5 percent. Junior doctors and dentists will get “at least” 2 percent. The government confirmed, “Today’s increases are funded from departmental budgets.”

Even in the best-case scenario, the deals will still leave

workers poorer in real terms than they were in 2010, when the Tories came to office.

Since then workers have suffered pay freezes, caps and below-inflation deals. For teachers this has meant a real terms cut of 15 percent.

Average pay for all workers was around £1,200 a year less in 2016 than it was in 2008, according to the TUC.

Some of the rises are below the official CPI measure of inflation, which was 2.4 percent last month. The

RPI figure, which is more realistic as it includes housing costs and council tax, was 3.4 percent.

Several unions including the NEU, the biggest education union, had demanded a fully-funded 5 percent

rise this year. Delegates to the NEU conference in April instructed the union to “ballot all members for strike action, if our demands are not met, at the earliest opportunity in the 2018/19 academic year”.

Jess Edwards is on the NEU (NUT section) executive. She told Socialist Worker, “Our schools have suffered huge cuts. This announcement is nowhere near what is required to repair the damage to schools or to restore teachers’ living standards.”

Workers shouldn’t settle for the Tories’ shoddy pay deals and service cuts, and should demand their unions lead a real fight over pay.

There is plenty of money to give workers much bigger rises.

MPs’ basic salary has gone up every year for the last seven years. In that time they’ve had a total rise of £11,600 and now grab £77,379 a year. This is before expenses and other extra payments.

The 1,000 richest people in Britain saw their total wealth go up by 10 percent since last year. It now stands at a record £724 billion.

Civil service pay ballot shows how Tory law can threaten collective action

by NICK CLARK

A PUBLIC sector union’s fight to beat the 1 percent pay cap was set back by Tory anti-union laws on Monday.

Civil service workers in the PCS union voted by almost 86 percent for strikes in a ballot.

But they didn’t meet the 50 percent turnout threshold demanded by the 2015 Trade Union Act—meaning it would be unlawful to call a strike.

Some 42 percent of PCS members took part in the ballot—and nearly 51,000 of them voted to strike.

A national strike would cause disruption at major



Mark Serwotka in a video message to members

workplaces such as HM Revenue and Customs and Department for Work and Pensions offices.

PCS activists were furious that the law had stifled a fight against the Tories’ poverty pay cap policy.

Workers’ annual pay increases have been held at 1 percent—well below inflation—since 2010.

That means many of them have had thousands of pounds effectively cut from their wages.

PCS general secretary Mark Serwotka said, “The government’s laws are undemocratic. They are not applied to anyone else in society.”

Yet despite the setback,

Serwotka also pointed out that the results showed the highest turnout in a ballot in the union’s history.

The campaigns to turn out the vote in districts that got the best results show it was possible to hit the threshold.

Personally

In some branches PCS reps strove to hold members meetings, talk to individual members’ personally about the campaign and encourage them to vote.

Candy Udwin, a public sector worker and member of the PCS’s national executive committee (NEC), spoke to Socialist Worker in

a personal capacity.

“We have to be positive about what did happen. The campaigning that happened felt better than anything we’ve had for a while,” she said.

Serwotka said some 2,000 people had joined the PCS “in the last few weeks” and that hundreds of people had agreed to become new reps.

Yet the ballot campaign also revealed where the union’s organisation needed serious improvement.

Candy said workplace organisation had “suffered” over the years, and that too many places had lost the

turn to page 19>>>